NEW RIDDLE COMPETITION STARTS IN THIS WEEK'S "PEARSON'S WEEKLY."

SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 591. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 28TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

Nervousness and Depression.

A person whose Digestion is weak becomes Dyspeptic, Nervous, and generally run-down. The reason is that ill-digestion means that the Body is ill-nourished, and suffers from what is known as mal-nutrition—the Nerves in particular.

That is why so many people—especially Women—are depressed, morbid, melancholy, irritable, and suffer so terribly from prolonged or intermittent Nervous attacks, facial agonies, Neuralgia, &c.

Those who have weak Digestion have urgent need of Guy's Tonic. Those who are Nervous and subject to Nerve Pains, Headache, Backache, Facial Attacks, also need Guy's Tonic. This Remedy first brings about Good Appetite and Perfect Digestion, and thus promotes enjoyment of Food, preventing the appearance of unpleasant Symptoms after meals.

Guy's Tonic, then, exerts a Constitutional tonic power, which is restorative of waning Nerve Strength by its stimulative action upon the Assimilative tissues of the Body, whose office is to create Nourishment for the Nerves out of the Food you eat and should digest.

Declining Energy, waning Strength, loss of Nerve power, and a debilitated Digestion are thus all corrected by the use of Guy's Tonic, and a new lease of life seems as it were to be attained, to give the patient healthy activity, natural enjoyment, and physical vigour.

Mr. W. Campbell Muir, of Inistrynich, Dalmally, N.B., writes:

"For four months I was suffering from Nausea, Flatulence, and Depression. Occasionally three days would pass without my having eaten solid Food. I tried various remedies, which did good for a day or two, but the effects were not permanent. I thought at last I would try Guy's Tonic, and with great pleasure I have to inform you that I had only taken half a bottle before my appetite returned, the Flatulence disappeared, and I am now as well as ever."

Mrs. Manning, of 89 Rosleigh Street, Cliftonville, Belfast, writes on February 6th, 1900:

"My Husband and I have taken Guy's Tonic occasionally for some years, and have found it very Beneficial and Satisfactory for General Debility of the System and Sluggish Liver."

A new size (Six Ounce) bottle of Guy's Tonic, price 1s. 1½d., is now on Sale at all Chemists and Stores.

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Design No. 281

10/6

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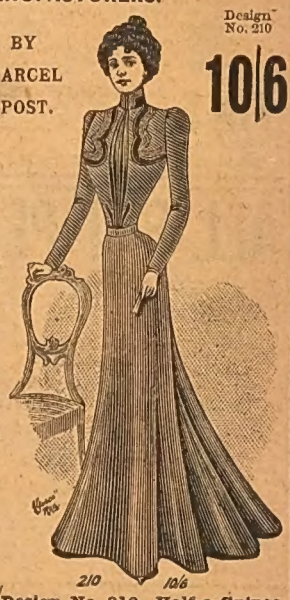
Design No. 210



10/6

Design No. 281. 10/6. This is quite an up-to-date design. It has a short coat pointed in front and setting close at back; velvet collar. The Skirt is cut in the latest approved style. Made in **Specialite Serge** and in the smooth-faced **Venetian Cloth** in all colours. Costume complete, 10/6; carriage paid 6d. extra. Marvellous value! The Coat can be lined through for 3/6 extra, and the Skirt lined linenette for 2/6 extra. The Coat and Skirt makes up splendidly in Allen Foster & Co.'s new **Melton Coating**, price 17/6. (Patterns Free.)

Design No. 210. Half-a-Guinea. Allen Foster & Co. call special attention to this costume. The style is most attractive and extremely ladylike, and represent the **best value** in costumes obtainable for **Half-a-Guinea.** It is made in the two excellent cloths, the Specialite Serge and Venetian Cloth, **all colours.** There is lining in bodice and sleeves. It has a full pleated front and is trimmed with good velveteen and beaded gimp on bodice and collar. The Skirt is well-made and finished. **A Great Bargain** for **10/6**, carriage paid 6d. extra. Skirt alone, 5/6; carriage paid 5d. extra.

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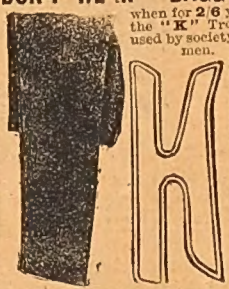

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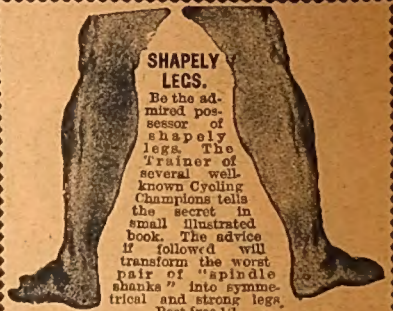

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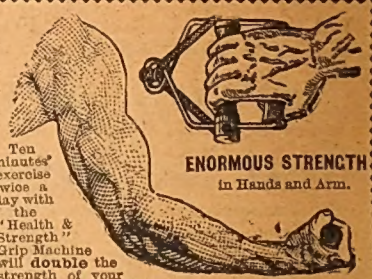

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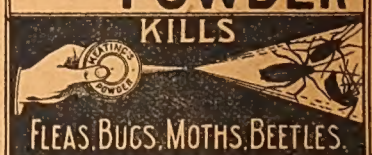

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SHORT STORIES

No 591.] [One Penny.

For the Week Ending April 28th, 1900.

Hunted to the Death.

The western sky, at sunset, looked like a dark red pool of blood that had flowed down the sides of the cloud mountains, and collected in the hollow between their steeps. The abruptness of the vaporous pinnacles and ravines seemed but a repetition of the deeply graven face of the region which lay round me.

In the rough face of a connecting parapet there was a natural entrance, of sufficient height to admit a man walking erect. Passing through this doorway, I found myself in a passage turning first one way and then the other; dark at first, it presently became lighter, and finally, opened into an enclosed space—a chamber wide and high, upon the floor of which flamed and flickered the logs of a hunter's fire, sending upward through some crevice in the roof above a thin spiral of smoke.

Beside the fire and bending over the blaze, crouched a figure, which in that weird light resembled one of those gnomes by whose hands this castle in the wilderness might have been erected.

The smoothness of the entrance-passage, and the soundless tread of my moccasined feet, had brought me into this presence without warning, and only that nameless sensation which causes the propinquity of one human being to be felt by another, impelled the figure to lift its head and say:

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"What yo' do here? Eh?"

I cannot affirm that it was by the exercise of tact that I succeeded in allaying the suspicions and finally in winning the friendship of this singular being—for, oddly though we were thrown together, we became in time the best of friends. Tact is scarcely a feature of my character; and I am persuaded that no amount of that quality would conquer the reserve of so strange a man. He perceived that I, like himself, was in harmony with the world of nature, and that sufficed. And, having drifted thither, it came to pass that there I remained with "Old Raven" as my sole companion.

He was past middle life, and therefore more wedded to the superstitions of his race than a younger man of his tribe would have been. He belonged to that peculiar people whose home is on the heights above the torrid sands which drink up the waters of "the loud-singing Gila." A hermit by nature he was always offering up propitiatory sacrifices to some Indian deity, for reasons which, for a time, I did not comprehend.

He selected the choicest portions of his game—for he was a hunter—and having carried them to the summits of the high towers before mentioned, he there consumed them with fire.

His only weapon was his flat bow of buffalo-rib, whipped with raw sinew; but by his inimitable patience in stalking he generally contrived to get within range of his quarry.

His aspect was most striking. He was not of unusual height, but his shoulders were huge, his arms long; and the coppery skin was drawn so tightly over his gaunt loins as to reveal every movement of bone and muscle underneath. His features were strong and grim in expression, and there was a depth in the setting of the eyes such as is seldom seen in a savage man. His head, arms, and muscular torso were naked; and coiled among the shock of black hair lay the scalp-lock closely braided and tied with deer-sinew.

One day he called my attention to a number of rough-healed scars upon his breast and sides, and said in reference to them, that a certain desperate man of his own tribe had persecuted him for many years, actuated by some vital hatred, and tried unavailingly to goad him to combat. Finally, all other means failing, he waylaid and murdered a nephew of "Old Raven" of whom the latter was especially fond and proud.

It would be useless to attempt to render the force of the old Indian's manner in telling this story—the sullen fits of musing and muttering, broken by storms of passion. "Den me kill 'um. We fight long—all strip—all blood. Las' me take 'um back down—drive knife in here."

He drew a deep breath and his frame seemed to dilate. The wide chest heaved with passion.

"See, him knife me here. But 'Ole Raben,' him strong, like buffalo. Knife no hurt 'um—laugh—heap—so."

And the terrible old man gave utterance to an appalling chuckle. In consequence of this deed, he went on to say, he had fled from his tribe and lived an outcast. And now followed the dark secret of his present life. In a deep, guttural undertone he told me that he had been pursued in his flight, though not by any human avenger.

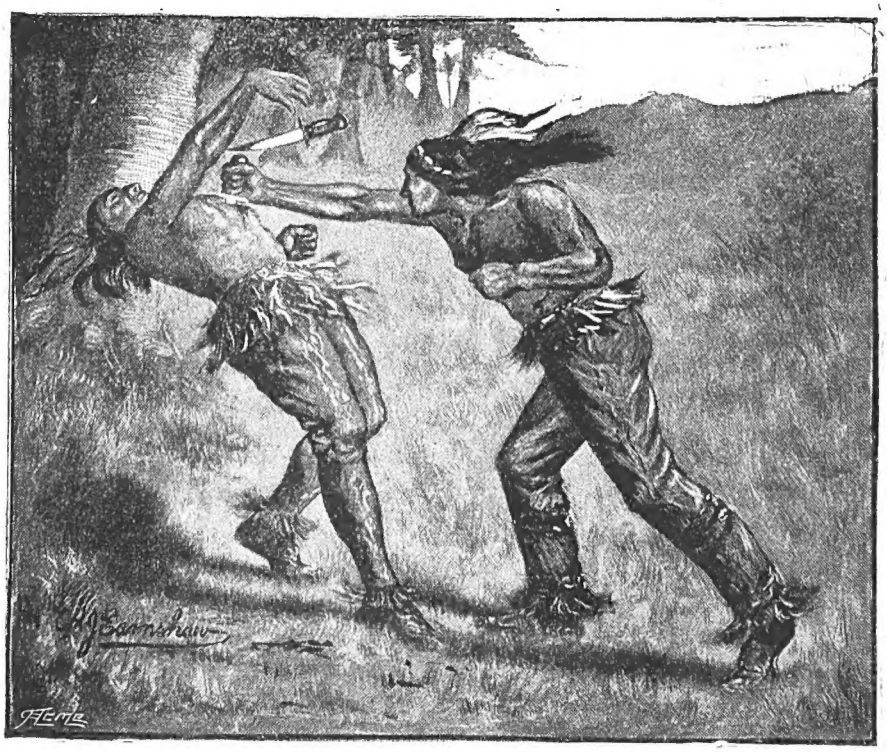
Everywhere an enormous grizzly bear dogged his footsteps; and in this monster—so his superstitious belief assured him—the spirit of the dead Indian whose name was "Big Thunder" had taken up his abode.

"Me know 'um, know 'um sure. Him big—hump all white, an' right on bre's' long red mark. Him point 'um foot, show me, an' grin. Den me know 'um—Big Thunder."

After a gloomy pause he added:

"Me never know when come. Jus' like steal-man. Sometime night, sometime day—but alway come, show me big red mark, an' grin an' go way. Some day me kill 'um too. Den me res' heap."

During my explorations of this wild land, I chanced one day upon a region of a different character from that which we inhabited. It was well watered and wooded, and I was lured onward until I



"Den me kill 'um We f ght long—all strip—all blood."

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found its central well-spring. Deep between rocky hills it lay, the only approach to it being through the long gorge by which I had come. The descent from the level of the upper plain was steep, and the rocky sides of the downward path offered a marked contrast to the verdure of the valley below. For at the end of the gorge the rocky walls suddenly diverged, and opened to my view a lovely oasis, in the midst of which was the spring itself, clear and cold, with water cresses about its margin, and the blue of the sky mirrored within.

A lovely spot where to linger and dream. The trill of the little stream, murmuring on its way down the glen, was the only sound audible. After quenching my thirst I paused a moment to admire the rough carnelian and jasper pebbles which surrounded the margin.

And then I saw something which had hitherto escaped my notice. Two long impressions, almost in shape like human footprints, except that certain sharp, deep indentations marked their extremities, had displaced the soil. With a sudden thrill of the nerves I glanced quickly up.

No sign of life met my gaze. But in a moment there came a sound from the direction of the gorge—a noise as of running; and immediately after a great mule-deer leaped from the rocky entrance.

He stopped, swaying upon his limbs, and gazed an instant, a worried look in his eyes, his head scarcely upbearing his branching horns. He threw a frightened glance over his shoulder, for down the pass came a whining note and rustling footsteps like the moving of dead leaves upon the snow. Gathering, the buck sprang forward again; and now I saw an arrow sticking in his shoulder; it was driven to the feather and worked as he ran.

"Poor fellow," thought I; "truly you are hunted to the death; but those ravening coyotes shall never drag you down."

A keen glance along the barrel, a darting flame—and prone he staggered and fell, almost beside the spring. The lean, grey crew of pursuers, crowding out from the pass, stopped at the crack of my rifle to look and listen; they lifted their heads, and with ears, eyes, and noses strove for the sight and scent; then, down drooping again, slunk with lowered tails afar, and skirting the edge of the valley, were soon lost in the thorny mazes of the chapparal.

But once more, from out of the deep cañon came another and more awful note. Some great body was pushing its way down, in an awkward and lumbering gallop, while smothered snorts and vengeful gruntings told of collisions against the jagged sides of the narrow way; and laboured breathing reached my ears, as if the creature had run long and hard. Not the wolves alone were following the trail of the wounded buck.

Fearing to rise erect, I succeeded by rolling over and over across an intervening stretch of turf, in gaining a place of concealment in the thick chapparal.

There I waited, but not for long. I already knew what was to come; and in another instant the open door of the gulch gave egress to a grizzly bear of unprecedented size and strange marking. Out he came, headlong, and without a moment's pause, lunged straight forward on the trail of the deer.

Two long impressions had displaced the soil.

On reaching the carcase he halted with a snort, and rearing upward on his haunches, gave utterance to a loud "hough," followed by a hoarse and heavy muttering.

As he stood so, beating the air with his great paws, sharp-set with talons, there seemed to be in his action something almost human. He turned his great head in all directions, protruding his long, straight upper lip beyond his broad nose, in the effort to unravel the mystery.

His small, piggish eyes gleamed and rolled in their red setting; a hideous grin bared his teeth, and I could almost fancy that he was about to speak. The wind, fortunately, blew directly from him to me and I could plainly perceive the peculiar half-human odour which he gave forth.

Failing to discover my presence, he turned his attention to the deer, and moved about it with a semblence of grotesque and horrible dancing, as if in gloating anticipation of the coming feast. At length he dropped on all fours, grasped the carcase by the fore-shoulder and, lifting it with ease, made off down the glen.

I had been lying all this while in a painfully cramped position and now to relieve myself I incautiously moved one arm. At the sound the monster dropped his prey and came back at a gallop. Within twenty paces of my retreat he reared himself up once more. He grinned hideously; his ears were flattened close to his skull, while his square muzzle fairly wrinkled and twitched with rage. As he stood

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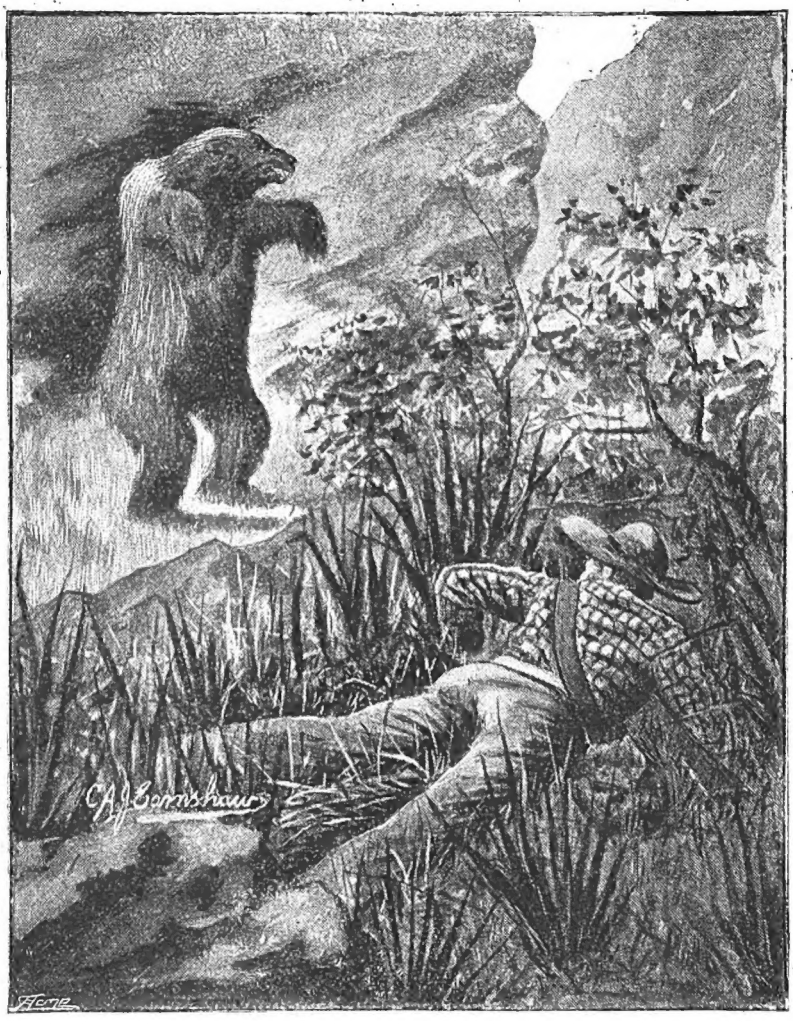
there I judged his height to be fully seven feet. His immense bulk, clothed in grey, was marked by a high hump of startling whiteness; and—awful sight!—there, between his forelegs upon his hairy breast I beheld the self-same sign of which Old Raven had told me—a long dull splash of red.

How or when I got back to our camp in the rocky castle, I hardly know; I was sound in body and limb, but woefully disturbed in spirit. Nor was Old Raven in a mood to cheer me, on the contrary he was in a particularly bad humour. He had, it appeared, stalked and wounded a buck; but the animal, just as he shot, had started at something and jumped back; the arrow had struck in the shoulder and the deer got away.

"May be me fin' 'um mornin'," he added as he rolled himself in his buffalo robe and composed himself to sleep.

But the grizzly had so impressed me that I no longer wondered at Old Raven's strange notion concerning it, and next morning I exerted all my powers of persuasion to prevent him from following the trail. When I remembered how close the monster had been to me, and imagined the probable results of an encounter between it and the Indian, I confess to a nervous tremor that I could not control. I could not deny that a spell, real or imaginary, seemed to attend the presence of the animal. Old Raven, though he could have had no suspicion of my adventure, manifested an unwonted restlessness. Did he divine the neighbourhood of that creature?

A few days later, while in pursuit of antelope, we met with an experience which had the effect of strengthening the superstitious feeling that had already begun to find lodgment in my mind.



Within twenty paces of my retreat he reared himself up once more.

In the effort to get within reach of the "children of the plains" we had traversed long stretches of alkali and sand. The herd which we followed sauntered aimlessly about, cropping at intervals some withered herbage or cactus which sparsely clothed the more fertile portions of the plain, and guarded jealously by the ever alert buck. A near approach on our part seemed impossible; as often as we gained what we anticipated would be vantage ground, we would find that the herd had moved a corresponding distance, maintaining the usual number of yards between themselves and us. Finally Old Raven said:

"Me go 'um rock—no furder."

The rock to which he pointed resembled at the first glance, part of a range of fallen edifices of stone, massed abruptly on the plain where the shy animals were grazing. But the antelope, so far from regarding the great pile with misgiving, seemed to be designedly drawing nearer to it. At length we saw them march in single file along the narrow wall which skirted the base of the cliff, led by the guardian buck, whose white rump, even as we looked, disappeared behind a boulder, followed in regular procession by the entire herd.

When the last one had vanished the old Indian, with the stealthy action of his race, glided on before from point to point, behind stone and bush, creeping onward, his broad back undulating like some huge saurian, over and among the scattered masses that diversified the way. Finally, having reached a point from which it seemed probable that the game might be killed, he rested. Meanwhile, I had imitated his tactics and joined him where he lay.

Slowly and cautiously the stalker lifted his dark

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head above the wall. For an instant he remained at gaze; then turned a blank look towards me and exclaimed in a low guttural tone:

"Antelope—no see!"

It was true; not a "goat" was in sight. Where had they gone—or flown? We stood up and looked abroad, where the wide plain stretched away below us, for we had slowly ascended since the beginning of our stalk.

Then we made our way to a higher and drier cleft. At this point there was an aperture in the wall, working in another direction. Old Raven glanced through it and then motioned me to do the same. It was a strange spectacle that I beheld.

I looked down into an open space surrounded on all sides by rock, at some points rising sheer, at others ascending and receding in terraces. The floor, nearly circular in shape, and traversed by long fissures, was crowded with the entire trembling band of antelope. Down from their bodies dripped the raindrops as they moved and shifted their positions. They were not more than fifty yards away from us.

Slowly and cautiously the stalker lifted his dark head above the wall.

A gleam of satisfaction lightened my companion's visage; gently he drew his bow, fitting an arrow to the string.

But before he could loose it a sudden panic fell upon the herd. They began to run in circles, confusedly, crowding closer together, and turning their wild eyes in terror towards the entrance of their harbour of refuge. Following the direction of their gaze, Old Raven emitted a gasp, his bow fell from his hand, and the barbed hunting shaft rattled harmlessly among the stones. In a husky voice he muttered:

"Ugh, him here, look, see. Big Thunder."

Yes, there, blocking the entrance with his immense body, stood the terrible grizzly. It was the same monster that I had already seen; there could be no room for mistake. No other had a shape so massive; none other the white hump; and none other—for, as we looked, he reared himself up, grinning and seeming to point to it with his paw—none other bore upon his breast that wide splash of red. It was Big Thunder indeed.

With a yell of defiance, Old Raven drew ready his knife, snatched up his bow and went leaping down the rocks towards the awful apparition. I followed him as rapidly as I might. But when we reached the spot where the bear had stood, not a living creature was in sight.

At sunset on the last evening of our stay we had kindled a fire, but by degrees it had burnt down leaving us in darkness.

I fell asleep and did not awaken until the moon had risen and thrown its light through an opening in the rocky roof, directly on the bed of Old Raven. My eyes rested upon it idly for a moment; then all at once I realized that it was empty.

I got up and crossed the floor. The Indian was nowhere to be seen, though the bed was still warm where he had lain. Desiring some explanation of his disappearance, I threaded the stone corridor, and emerged into the outer air.

A sound proceeding from above, caused me to look upward, and I discovered a figure on one of the tower summits. Its attitude was of supplication; it stood with arms outstretched, facing the moon. The head was slowly bowed and lifted again, and a low chanting came faintly to my ears. It was a sound filled with grief; it seemed to mingle with the pale moonlight, and then to pass into shadow and lose itself over the dreary plain. The distance was too great for me to discern Old Raven's features, but I knew it must be he.

I wandered back to my bed again, and slept till the yellow light of day awakened me. My first glance was towards the Indian's bed. It was still empty. I was the only living being in the cavern. I rose, and after hastily swallowing a few mouthfuls of food, I took my rifle and set out to search for him. I was inclined to think that he had left the neighbourhood; and I was impressed with the idea that he was in some danger.

Although there was nothing to guide me as to the direction I should take, chance or destiny led my steps straight to the rocky pass where the mule-deer had fallen.

I reached it in due time, and passing down between its high walls, stopped ever and anon to listen. I heard at length something that made my heart beat quicker, stirred my expectant nerves, and hastened my lingering footsteps. I hurried anxiously forward, and gained at last the open space of the fairy glade. Again that low murmur came to my ears. At first I could not determine whence it proceeded. But a few more steps brought me within sight of what I had dreaded. Partly

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hidden by the low bushes near the spring lay Old Raven sorely wounded.

He raised himself painfully upon his hands at my approach, turning upon me as he did so his ghastly countenance, lacerated and wet with blood. His half dead eyes, glowing still with sullen fire strove to fix their wavering gaze. He had been pouring water over his brow; and the little rill that sang its soft music off among the reeds, flowed with crimson streaks below him.

I knelt by his side, and stooping, partly raised him. But his limbs were numb and essayed in vain to support the dying frame. Raising one heavy arm he pointed down the glade, and muttered some indistinguishable words. Divining his wish I left him and ran to the spot indicated. It was as I expected. There writhed the great bear in his last struggle, the keen knife of his mortal foe standing straight up above his loins. The torrent of blood had soaked the grizzly's hide, matting the long hair upon his flanks and smearing the hideous face where he had sought with busy muzzle to staunch the fatal wounds.

Feebly he waved the knife above his head.

When he saw me he growled venomous impotency, and strove again and again to gain his feet. For a moment he actually succeeded in doing so, but immediately, all his forces ebbing, he swayed, staggered, and vomited a great gush of blood. He gave his huge head a last shake as of baffled rage. He trembled, reared himself half erect, toppled, and then lunged forward with a long slide upon the earth—dead.

I returned to the Indian, and taking him into my arms, carried him to the side of his now lifeless enemy. He stretched forth his hand, plucked out the knife from the carcase, and, as a last mark of defiance, essayed to slash the monster's head.

"Ole Raben kill yo', las'," he said slowly. "Big Thunder yo' track him no more."

Feebly he waved the bloody knife above his head. A fierce smile kindled upon his features and the death-song began. At times his voice almost failed; but the grim, brave heart roused again and the chant sounded forth once more. At the end he took my hand, pressed it to his forehead, fell back, straightened his limbs with a quiver, and was gone.

* * *

The passing wind which swept over the lonely place, took upon its wings the strong soul of Old Raven, and bore it far from the secret glade where he had met and slain the monstrous shape that harboured the spirit of his foe. There was death in the midst of life. The sweet, wild breeze, the grasses under foot, the birds above, seemed hastening to conceal the traces of the fray on the surface of fair nature's breast.

Edward Kerneys.

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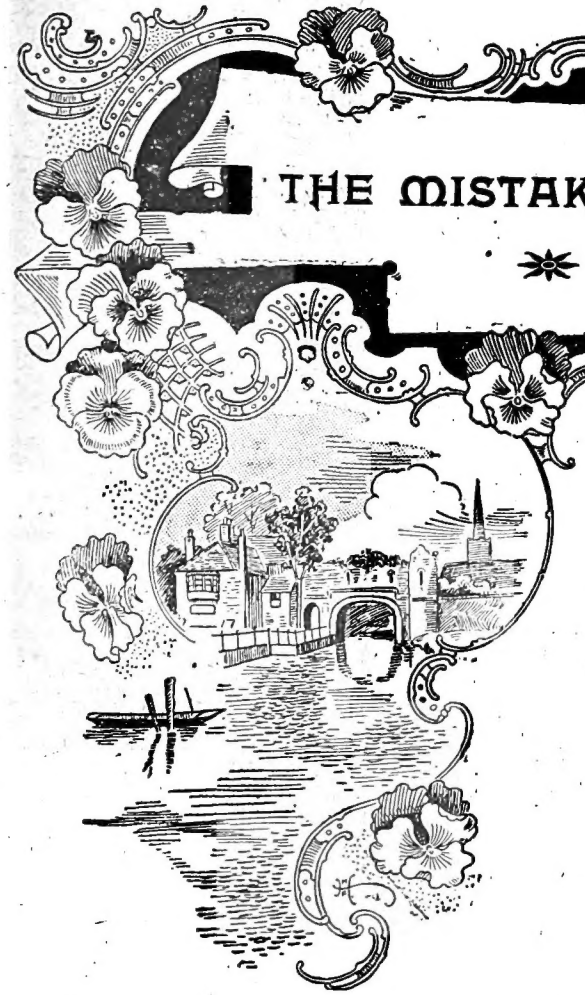
THE MISTAKE OF THE DOCTOR.



EXTRACT from the *Cheshire Chronicle*, December 2nd 1899.

WE regret to have to announce the death of Dr. Edward Tresselliau, F. R. S., who died at Orpinham Hall, on the 30th ultimo, of consumption after a tedious and trying illness. The deceased gentleman who will long be remembered in the medical world by his brilliant work on Biology which gained him the coveted distinction of the Fellowship of the Royal Society, was one of the most promising of our rising scientists. Even amidst the toilsome and arduous duties of a country practitioner he found time to lay the foundation of his *Magnum Opus* which he had the satisfaction of completing during the last few months of his life., etc., etc.

The house was silent with the utter peacefulness of night and to Edward Tressellian poring over his microscope the hours seemed but as minutes. Condemned by fate to earn his livelihood as a country practitioner, his keen analytical mind revelled in the opportunities that the night gave him of pursuing his experiments in original research. Already the end was in sight, and in imagination he saw the "trivial round, the common task" laid aside and a magnificent career, of usefulness opening out before him. He saw the patient waiting of his wife rewarded by the unlimited companionship that freedom from the drudgery of practice would enable them to enjoy and he bent with renewed zest over his work.

Br-r-r-r rang out the imperative summons of his night-bell and with a sigh for his interrupted experiment, he went to the front door.

"I'm very sorry to disturb you at this time of night Doctor," said a woman's voice from the darkness, "but Mrs. Heale, of Court Street forgot to send for the medicine this evening and her boy is very fretty and bad. Would you mind giving him some medicine?"

"Certainly," the doctor cheerily replied. "It's lucky I hadn't gone to bed—come inside and sit down."

"Poor lad," he muttered, as he lit the gas in his surgery, "it'll be a happy release for him when he dies—only ten years old and to suffer as he does is terrible; somehow I don't feel comfortable giving him these huge doses of morphia, but anyway it's the only thing that does him any good. I wonder she didn't send the phial—she generally does." So saying he filled the tiny bottle with the morphia solution—wrapped it up methodically and took it to the messenger.

"Tell Mrs. Heale to be sure and not let anyone else take it," he said, giving the woman the package.

"Very well, sir, I'm exceedingly obliged to you," she replied, and Tressellian walked back to his room and glanced at the clock:

"By George—it's two o'clock! 'pon my soul I get so absorbed that I forget the poor little woman upstairs." With loving hands he replaced his instruments in their drawers and went softly up to bed, finding to his great relief that his wife, tired out, was fast asleep. He lay for some time 'twixt sleep and waking whilst his brain, over excited by his work, began reviewing the visits that he had paid on the previous day. Then his child moaned in its sleep and still half-unconscious he remembered a remark passed by one of his patients:

"Why, doctor, my boy until yesterday looked as healthy as yours."

Surely, he thought, that must have been a Mrs. Heale in Court Street who made that remark—a fresh patient, albeit a poor one. Then in an instant he woke with an awful feeling of dread stealing over him. Until yesterday there had been only one "Heale" on his list, and that one whom he had seen dozens of times, but now surely there were two and that second one a baby.

He could tell at once if he had made a fatal mistake or not by going down and seeing if the child's medicine, made up the previous day, had been sent for.

With the cold sweat standing on him, he crept from

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bed and stole down the stairs, which creaked ominously, and stood shivering in the surgery. Unwilling to have his fears confirmed he refrained from lighting a match but felt on the shelf. His hand closed like a vice on a tiny package, and he knew that he had unwittingly and perhaps pardonably killed another man's child. For a few minutes he sat in his night clothes, clutching the innocent cause of his undoing, seeing nothing in front of him but disgrace and ruin.

Then, in his distress he remembered his wife and knowing full well that prompt action, with such a poisonous dose, would be of no service he slowly went to his bedroom and laid his head on his wife's shoulder.

"Eh—Ned—haven't you been to bed—you'll break down you know, if you work too hard," she sleepily remarked, but then seeing from his face that something serious was amiss, "is the child all right?"

"Yes our child is quite well, thank God," he fervently replied.

"Come, Ned, what is the matter—you look as if" looking fearfully around, "you had seen a ghost."

"I have—you remember that poor lad in Court Street?"

"Dick Heale—rather—why I've filled up his little bottle lots of times when you've been out and Mrs. Heale has asked me to."

"Well—did you know that there is another family of that name three doors up—I was called in yesterday to see their baby, and they omitted to send for the medicine until just before I came to bed. They asked for Heale's medicine and—" he hesitated.

"My poor darling," she tenderly said, "you have given the baby poison then. Oh! I'm so sorry for you and the poor mother, cannot you do anything for it. Don't waste any more time, but hurry and" she whispered, "I'll say my prayers for you all."

Hastily slipping on his clothes and kissing his wife, Tressellian with everything that science could suggest, went sadly down the village street. The dawn was breaking, the birds were beginning to twitter, and an indescribable freshness was in the air, but he noticed none of these things—only the terrible sorrow for the life thus cut short seemed to overwhelm him. He stood finally outside the cottage which seemed perfectly quiet, and a fervent hope filled his breast that perhaps after all the fatal draught might not have been given. A cowardly desire surged through his mind to go back home and wait until morning but conquering it by an effort of will he knocked at the door again and again. At length a light appeared in the bedroom and the window was opened.

"Who's there?" shouted a man's voice.

"It's the doctor—come down, for I want to speak to you about the child," said the unfortunate man. With ears straining to catch every sound, he heard a woman's voice, and then a long loud scream followed by a piteous wailing. Then he heard footsteps descending the stairs and in another minute the bolts were drawn and the door opened.

"Oh, Doctor, the Missus fears the child is dead, and she's taking on turble bad—go up at once."

With his face pale as death Tressellian went up the stairs to his fate, and the sight he beheld struck terror to his breast. Clad in her nightdress with the child on her knees the woman was rocking to and fro in her sorrow, but at once, on seeing him enter she sprang into energy and passion. Then with her hard face convulsed with grief she faced him like a fury.

"Doctor—Doctor—what have you done to my child. I gave him a dose of your medicine directly Mrs. Jones brought it, and he went off to sleep at once. Somehow I had my suspicions of it, but I trusted you. Oh! what shall I do—what shall I do!"

With practised hand Tressellian assured himself that the child was really dead, and reverently laid it down in its bed. Seeing his face, the mother's fury blazed out afresh.

"And you call yourself a doctor! Why, you've murdered my child instead of curing him, and he my only one. Shame on you to be so careless—would to God I had never seen you." She burst into a passionate flood of tears whilst the doctor stood silent.

"Have you nothing to say for yourself. Man! Surely you didn't do it on purpose," she at length bitterly asked.

"My poor woman, God only knows I am innocent of any wrong-doing in this matter; your child had Dick Heale's medicine, which by an excusable mistake I gave your friend in the night. Consolation I cannot offer you, but it may interest you to know I would give my right hand to undo this."

He spoke wearily and without heat, but the mother was not appeased.

"I don't care," she sullenly replied. "You've killed my child, and I'll ruin you for it. I'll see that you kill no other babies in this town; you set up for being a clever man and—there get out of my sight or I shall go mad."

With head bowed the doctor left the room and went down the rickety stairs.

"I'm main sorry for you, Doctor, but it's the Missis' only child, and it ain't in reason for her not to take on—is it?" said the labourer in a low voice as he let him out.

With slow and faltering steps Tressellian returned to his house and sought what comfort he could get with a loving woman's arms around him.

* * * * *

The inquest proved as he had suspected a deadly blow to his practice, whilst Catherine Heale carried out her threat with all the venom that embittered hate could suggest. One by one his friends found it convenient to be out when he called, whilst the inhabitants of the village studiously ignored his salute and made him writhe with impotent fury.

He noticed his rival visiting houses, where hitherto he had been the trusted adviser, and he felt the bitterness of failure was on him.

His pride would not allow him to give way, and day after day his cob would be brought to the door and he would start on a round, well knowing that everyone knew his journeys to be a sham.

His wife with the staunchness of a good woman stood loyally by her husband, and quarrelled with all her friends for his sake. Night after night Tressellian sat in his study idle and silent and wondering what he could do for the best; for with his practice, his only capital, ruin could be but a matter of time.

One day he asked to see the banker's book which his wife kept, and closely examined it, and there found an entry of sixty pounds for which he could not account. Leaning over him his wife laid her hand on his head.

"Don't bother, darling—I felt we didn't want all those rings and things and so—I just sold them—When we get rich you can buy them back—"

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That night the doctor carefully reviewed his position, and with a shudder came to the conclusion that he was the "one too many." His wife's relations, wealthy people, would help her if he were gone and so it came to a question of methods. To leave a heritage of shame to his boy was not to be thought of for a moment, so he took a hypoder ic syringe and in ected into his system enough tuberculous matter to produce, as he judged, a rapid consumption. Then with a mind at rest he faced the future with less of pain than he had for some weeks, and even with some return of his old spirits.

A week later he came down to breakfast, a meal now undisturbed by the visits of anxious patients, and found a blue letter on his plate. With a shudder he tossed it to his wife:

"Don't read it me if it is disagreeable, dear! I've got quite enough on my mind as it is," he said cursing himself the while for his cowardice.

The woman broke the seal and read it and then her eyes filled with tears, and she rose and went and tenderly kissed t e despondent man.

"Read that you silly boy," she said with a tremble in her sweet voice.

7, Lincoln's Inn,
22—2—'98.

My Dear Sir,—I have great pleasure in informing you that you are the residuary legatee to the late Colonel Claughton of Orpinham Hall, Cheshire. Owing to our not having drawn the will, we were unaware of the terms of it, and hence could not let you know of his death. I must congratulate you on your succession to a fine property, and hope that we, etc., etc.

Hawke and Jones.

He laid the letter down and was about to speak when a servant entered the room.

"Please, sir, George wants to know what horse you will ride this morning."

As if by common thought, both Tressellian and his wife rose from the table and left the room, and went into the stable-yard arm in arm.

"Good morning, ma'am, good morning, sir," said the groom, his face brightening as he noticed the blithe look of his master and mistress. "What orders to-day?"

"Well, George," said his master, "I shall ride no more here."

"Good Lord, sir—don't ee say so—the folks are main ashamed of themselves for treating you as they have. The old folk say that they never had such friends as you and Missis afore, and, damn 'em—asking your pardon, mum—they don't deserve to. Why, Lor' bless ee, sir, they'll be round a-giving of you a friendly dinner, soon, just to make it up. Don't you go, sir, you'll get all the people back again."

"Many thanks, George—I believe you, for you have been a trusty friend these eight years. No! I'm not going because I'm driven away, but the truth is I have succeeded to an estate up North, and want you to look after us all up there. Will you come?"

The faithful fellow looked hard at them both and then turned and entered the stable, where, with sundry smacks on his horses flanks and sulty language, he relieved his over-charged feelings.

And it was in this wise that Edward Tresellian left Newton Pynes.

F. Engelbach.

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BY FAR AND AWAY

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Other articles, too numerous to mention, and half-a-dozen complete short stories, make ***Pearson's*** for May an ideal magazine.

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Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

3.—HE WHITEWASHES THE CELLAR, AND THE USUAL CALAMITY HAPPENS.

THERE was nothing in Mr. Bowser's demeanour during dinner to lead Mrs. Bowser to suspect that he had any particular scheme on hand for the evening, but scarcely had they got seated after the meal when he cleared his throat and gravely observed:

"Mrs. Bowser, how many times do you suppose we have faced death within the last six months?"

"Why, what on earth do you mean!" she exclaimed in alarm.

"I mean that we have been preserved about forty times over, and that miracles have been wrought in our favour. We are alive when we ought to have been dead. Every day and hour for the last half year we have stood face to face with the grim monster."

"I—I can't believe it!" she gasped.

"Perhaps not—not even when your husband says it, but it is the truth nevertheless. We have been in danger of typhoid fever, spinal miningitis, consumption, paralysis and a dozen other fatal diseases, and all through our own carelessness. I can hardly conceive how we have escaped."

"But what is it—why don't you tell me?"

"When was our cellar whitewashed last?" he asked in a voice hardly above a whisper.

"Why, about a year ago, I should think."

"Our cellar was whitewashed for sanitary reasons. The idea was to kill germs and microbes. After six months whitewash loses its strength and germs and microbes will frisk over it and actually feed upon it. For six months, then we have had no protection from the shafts of the fell destroyer. The malignant germs and microbes——"

"I'll get a man in to-morrow," she interrupted, "though I don't think there is any danger. There are thousands of cellars which are never whitewashed."

"There will be no need to call in the services of a man, Mrs. Bowser. I don't propose to pay a man fifteen shillings to come here and skim over the walls in an hour."

"But you—you don't mean that you will do it yourself?"

"That's exactly what I mean. I have a pail of whitewash and a brush at the back door. It will not only be healthful exercise, but inhaling the smell will do me good. I don't propose to leave a thousand microbes behind in some corner."

"Mr. Bowser, please leave this job to someone else," she pleaded in her tenderest tones. "If you go to daubing about with whitewash you'll get in trouble and blame it all on me. I'll have in a man to-morrow and see that it is well done."

"How'll I blame it on you!" sharply demanded Mr. Bowser.

"I—I don't know, but you will."

"That's all bosh! I never blame anything on you. I shall get into a suit of old clothes and proceed to whitewash. Nothing will happen, except that our lives will be rendered more safe for the next six months."

Mrs. Bowser groaned and turned away. Mr. Bowser would have begun that job even with both legs broken, and she knew that argument would be thrown away.

He had got a dose of the mixture in his right eye.

In a quarter of an hour he was at work, and she got down the camphor bottle, a box of ointment and a strip

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of adhesive plaster and made ready for what might happen.

Mr. Bowser felt elated as he sniffed at the whitewash. He thought he detected traces of a herd of microbes on the walls, and there was a grim satisfaction in his soul at the thought of swiping them out of existence.

His heart being in his work he put on the mixture with vigorous hand, and was just applying his third brushful when there was a sputter and a spatter and he dropped his brush with a shout.

He had got a dose of the mixture in his right eye. With that optic squinted up until it raised the end of his nose, and the other blinking like a blind horse, he groped his way into the scullery and applied cold water. He hoped to get through with it without a call from Mrs. Bowser, but the pain was still lifting his heels off the floor when she came down and observed:

"Did you call me, Mr. Bowser?"

"No, I didn't call you, and you know I didn't!" he shouted in reply. "It's mighty funi that you have to poke your nose everywhere! When I want you I'll let you know."

"But didn't you call out?"

Having struck the back of his head on the hard floor he was dazed.

"If I did that was my own business. I think I can talk in my own cellar if I take a notion to. A microbe flew into my eye, and I'm getting it out."

She left him, and after a long ten minutes he got enough of the lime out of his eye to enable him to open it again. His bald crown and face had been thickly spattered, but he was not discouraged.

He thought it would be a better plan to begin overhead and work gently until he had got into the swing of it.

He carried two old chairs out of the kitchen and placed them in position, and standing on one and placing the pail on the other he went to work again.

Confidence came to his heart as five minutes slipped away and no tragedy occurred. He had a smooth brick wall to work at, and as he saw it begin to whiten under his brush he felt something of the pride of a born artist.

In five minutes more he might have made himself believe that he was touching up a landscape in the Scotch Hills had he not made a long reach with his brush to overtake a small insect which was hurrying away.

The rickety chair on which he was standing made that an excuse for wobbling about and breaking down, and when Mr. Bowser fell it was of course eminently proper to take the other chair with him.

It was more than a shout this time. It was a yell which lifted Mrs. Bowser out of her chair and made the cook knock the nose off a jug, and the crash which followed almost made the windows rattle.

When Mrs. Bowser got down into the cellar she found a pail of whitewash, two broken chairs and a whitewash brush and Mr. Bowser all mixed up on the cement floor; but Mr. Bowser was not dead. The contents of the pail had soaked him from head to foot, and having struck the back of his head on the hard floor he was dazed and flighty.

With the assistance of the cook he was pulled to the wall and propped up, and a few sniffs of the camphor brought him out of the fog. Then Mrs. Bowser tenderly inquired:

"How did it happen, dear? Did the microbes suddenly attack you?"

A long minute went by before Mr. Bowser could get out a word. Then he slowly replied:

"Woman, I understand! You sneaked down here and kicked the chair from under me, but I am still alive!"

"Don't talk nonsense! Are you hurt!"

"You may go, woman! Go and plot and plan another attempt at murder!"

"But let me——"

"And to-morrow we will end this. Fifteen attempts to murder me in one year and now the end has come!"

"Mr. Bowser, I——"

But he gestured with his right and with his left, and kicked out with his legs, and Mrs. Bowser and the cook withdrew and left him alone with the frisky germs and microbes and fell diseases.

M. Quad.

Next Week: HE SHOWS MRS. BOWSER HOW TO DO SPRING HOUSE-CLEANING.

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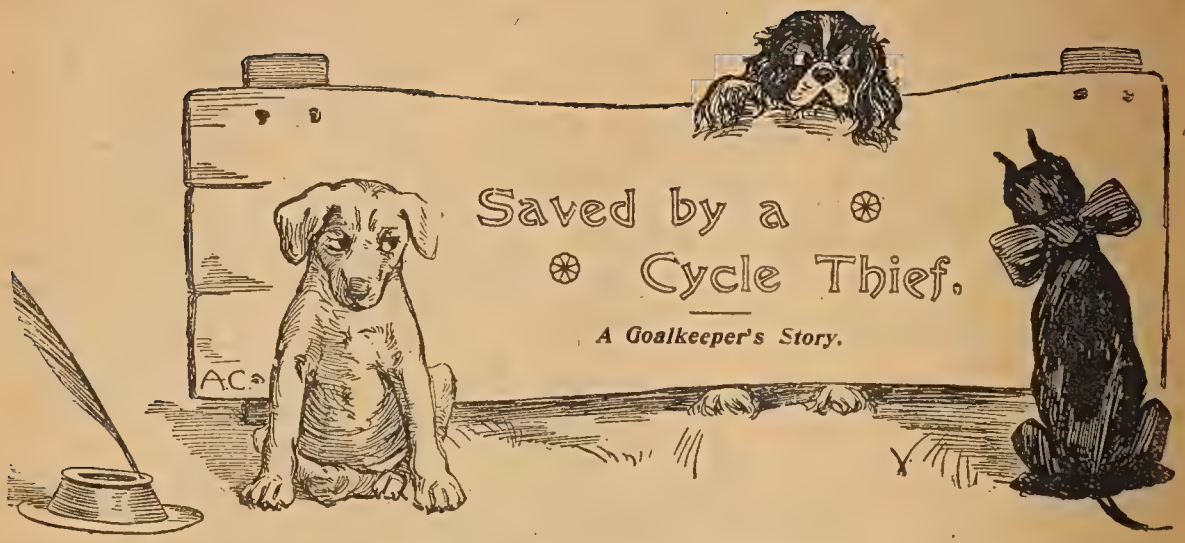

"I CAN'T make it out at all, Jack! I wouldn't hesitate half a minute, if there were a possibility of my playing on Saturday. But you are chosen. The funny thing is that he knows that. It's because I can do no possible harm that I feel like taking the money, if only to teach him a lesson."

It was Tuesday, and the speaker was my understudy in goal for the Dunmire team.

We were playing a big cup-tie the following Saturday, the last of the season, and were so sure of victory that our supporters were laying four to one—where they could get anybody to take it—on our winning.

Everything was such plain sailing that the team had been chosen the previous night, I had been chosen in goal—which, as I was described as the mainstay of the team, was a matter of course—and the only direction we had was to "keep straight and quiet."

It was this probable certainty of our winning which made me so puzzled as I looked into Bill Johnson's face and wondered whether somebody had been "having" him.

A bookmaker, locally known as "Black Jem"—from the darkness of his gipsy-cast countenance, I suppose—had been to him, and had laid fifty sovereigns on the table with the remark that it would be as much more to Bill's interest that the game should be lost.

I had heard of attempts to bribe players, and had often wondered whe her such things happened; but what on earth could be the meaning of this attempt to get at a man who was not to play!

"Well, Bill," I remarked at last, "my advice is that you should not commit yourself; only take care he doesn't get the money back. What, by the way, did he say of the money if you don't keep goal?"

"He said that if I didn't keep goal the money was mine, and that was where I stood to pick up a little fortune for nothing, because he and his friends had taken the odds against your playing."

"Well, stick to the money and keep quiet until you hear from me. Mr. Best, our secretary, will be here in the morning, and I'll tell him."

Bill left me, evidently greatly relieved. The cruel thing about the offer of the bribe was that he needed the money. He had only the previous week told me that owing to having helped his aged father out of a serious difficulty it was probable he would have to put off his wedding.

Still thinking of the incident, and wondering how we could pay Black Jem in his own coin, I took my bike and was soon speeding away to a hamlet some miles away, much frequented by athletes of all kinds at the principal hostelry, at which there was that night to be a smoking concert.

Having put my machine in the usual room with others I was soon enjoying the "smoker" and the only remark which recalled football was a casual one by a man near me that someb dy was being foolish enough to take the odds our supporters were laying against our opponents of the coming Saturday.

About ten I left the concert, and went for my bike, only to find it gone!

All I could find out about it was that a waiter had seen someone he took to be myself passing out with the machine a few minutes before.

It was raining and the person who had walked off with my machine was wearing the cape I had left strapped to the bar, and hence had passed without notice.

The landlord offered me his machine, and I was soon on my way back determined to overhaul my man or put the police on his track.

I had to proceed with irritating caution for the night was dark, with only intermittent flashes of light as the clouds were driven by the wind and ever and anon presented a rift for the moonbeams.

Still, I kept up a fair speed, and scon had an inkling that I was not far behind somebody on a machine; for I heard a driver swearing at a rider, and jeeringly asking him had he ever ridden before.

Quickening my pace, I was rapidly nearing the bottom of the longest incline, when a break in the clouds enabled me to get a glimpse of somebody wobbling along, about a hundred and fifty yards ahead.

It seemed to me that he toppled over just as I lost sight of him. Then I heard what I took to be a

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shriek of pain, and as I drew up and leapt off my machine I heard a voice growl:

"Look out! There's somebody! He's settled!"

As I peered into the darkness, I thought I made out the forms of three men, disappearing in the gloom.

I stood hesitating what to do next, and wondering whether my machine had been collared by a gang, when I was startled by a groan from the left.

Detaching my lamp, and going cautiously forward, I found a man stretched on the ground, and bleeding from a cut on the forehead. I saw he was wearing my cape, whilst my machine was lying a few feet away! It was my bicycle thief, and he had evidently met his deserts.

To my intense relief, for I thought the rascal was badly hurt, I heard the approaching wheels of a cab I had left at the door of the hostelry, waiting for our club secretary.

I hailed it, and the driver bringing one of his lamps we soon had the fellow up, though he was utterly unable to stand.

Poor wretch! He was covered with dirt and blood, and so far as we could make out, appeared almost in the last stages of starvation.

It was evident his left foot had been hurt. What struck me, even then, as singular, was that his right hand appeared badly damaged.

We could not leave even a bicycle thief in such a plight; and having told cabby to put the machines as well as he could on the roof of the vehicle, we lifted the fellow inside, and drove straight into town.

On the way I told Mr. Best what had occurred, and we agreed that after leaving the machines at my house, we would hand our man over to the police where he would get treatment as well as punishment.

This arrangement was not destined to be carried out, for as we lifted the bikes down I noticed for the first time the front wheel of mine was entangled with a long piece of cord.

"Look here, Best," I cried, "somebody's roped him! And now I come to think, I thought I heard someone run away."

Best was too much concerned to notice what I said. He had struck a match and was looking at our prisoner.

"I don't like his looks, Jack," he said. "We had better take him inside and send for a doctor."

We acted on the suggestion, and a surgeon who lived near, was soon in attendance. He said the man was badly shaken, but that his prostration was as much due to starvation as anything else.

He remarked that the bruise on the ankle looked like a kick, and the injury to the right hand, which was covered with blood, puzzled him.

"Why," he cried, "this seems to have been stamped on! If those regular indentations are not nail marks I'm a noodle!"

Whilst he was speaking the famished-looking creature made an effort to raise himself, and huskily shrieked:

"Keep off my hand, yer devils! What are yer kickin' at! I only took it 'cause I wus starvin'?"

He sank back apparently exhausted.

His words had, however, flashed on my mind as a revelation.

Why had he been assailed and kicked? What could have possessed anybody to grind on a man's hand in this fashion.

Could there possibly be any connection between this dastardly affair, and the attempt to bribe Bill Johnson?

Had this poverty-stricken wretch been mistaken for myself, and involuntarily saved me and the club?

In as few words as possible, I told Best and the surgeon, who happened to be a club supporter, of the visit to Bill Johnson and of "Black Jem's" offer.

"It seems to me," observed the doctor, "the whole thing is a plant, and that you, Jack, would have had this fellow's injuries but for his attempting to steal your machine and cape."

"You may depend that's so, Jack," assented Best "You were announced to sing, and they intended settling you, and then nailing Billy Johnson on his acceptance of the £50. And that accounts for a good deal I could not understand about Dick Harris's remark that 'Black Jem's' gang had gone daft over this match, and stood to lose heavily in the event of our winning as seemed an absolute certainty."

We agreed the man's theft was the outcome of want, and were filled with such a sense of gratitude for the service he had, though unwittingly, rendered us, that we decided to send him to the union hospital instead of the police station.

After he had been driven away, we three sat and talked over the situation.

We soon saw how impossible it would be to connect "Black Jem" with the assault, and that the only way to get at him would be to get hold of as much of his money as we could.

This policy was made easy by the fact that we were laying the odds, and Dick Harris, who was let into the secret to get the money on, declared they had "almost sold their last rags."

The whole thing was kept quiet, and the rumour having got out that I had met with an accident, there was quite a buzz of anxious excitement as the team took the field without me.

My triumph, and that of Bill Johnson, too, came when I trotted on the field just on the time to start.

"Black Jem" sat brazenly in a front seat on the reserved stand, smoking a big cigar.

I really thought he would have fainted as I momentarily eyed him. His cigar fell from his mouth and he turned literally a ghastly green as the spectators cheered.

We won all right. I don't think I ever kept goal better. Our opponents declared that if I had exchanged with their man they would not have lost. As it was our score was three to none.

"Black Jem" was not there when we had finished. He was wanted by several who had taken his odds on the visitors, for he had been sure enough of the game to begin to reverse the odds.

The Monday following Bill Johnson got a letter demanding the return of the fifty pounds "under pain of exposure."

My reply—on Bill Johnson's behalf—that he could have the money when he came to settle with the man his blackguards had mistaken for me, apparently settled him. At any rate we never heard from him again.

To this day many people in Dunmire wonder how "Black Jem" got so far wrong over that game.

Not even now do they know how much they owe the hungry bicycle thief, or how completely, in the case of that cup tie, the biters were bitten.

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Absence Makes The Heart Grow Fonder.

"It's all rot you fellows talking in that way," cried Prior of the *Morning Patriot*. "'Absence makes the heart grow fonder' is very nice and fine in theory, but it doesn't work out in practice. If two persons are separated for a long time, they will not be as fond of each other, when they meet again, as they were before they parted."

"What if the two persons happen to be engaged, or are husband and wife?" asked Simpson, the London correspondent of a New York paper.

"Well, it's just the same thing. In a short time, the two lovers would forget all about each other and probably marry someone else. And in the case of the husband and wife there would probably be, a divorce case in the end."

"You're talking off the book now," chimed in Smythe, of the *Daily Bugle*. "There are plenty of lovers and plenty of married people who have survived years of separation."

"Just so, but they are the exceptions that prove the rule."

"Perhaps, perhaps not. There are plenty of cases that we never hear anything about. What do you think of it, Whiteley?"

Simpson was speaking to a little bald-headed man, who so far, had taken no part in the discussion. He was the City editor of a great London daily.

"I think you fellows are mostly idiots," he answered. "I used to talk like young Prior once, but I know better now. If you care to listen 'I will a tale unfold.'"

"Fire away," they chorussed, for Whiteley was noted for his yarns.

"The story I am about to tell you," continued the City editor, "happened several years ago. I can vouch for its accuracy for I knew all the persons concerned. At that time I was sub-editor on a large daily in a certain provincial town. The chief was a pretty decent sort of fellow, and after we had put the paper to bed, most of us used to stay on at the office until daylight smoking and chating.

"One night the conversation got round to the question you have been discussing—does absence make the heart grow fonder? The chief held the same opinions that young Prior does, and used very similar arguments. Most of us disagreed with him however.

"At that time, we had a young reporter named Wilson on the staff. He was a very clever young fellow, and should have made a name in his profession. This Wilson was engaged to a young lady named Miss Evans, who was employed as a typist in the advertisement department. They were known to be extremely fond of each other, and Wilson was a continual butt for the jokes of his colleagues.

"In order to prove his argument, the chief considerably surprised us, by offering to bet any one of us any reasonable sum, that after twelve months' separation Wilson and Miss Evans would no longer be lovers. None of us took the bet, but the chief, who could be a bit of a brute when he liked, determined to carry out his project, and endeavour to prove his assertions. We remonstrated with him as much as we dared, but the devil was in him just then, and he remained obdurate.

"That morning, Wilson received twenty-four hours' notice to start for Ashanti to act as war correspondent to the paper. He left next day, and we went down to the station in a body to wish him God-speed. Of course Miss Evans was there, and the parting of the two lovers was extremely affecting. It was unusually so to us who knew the real reason why Wilson was going out. Miss Evans was in tears, begging and praying Wilson to take care of himself and carrying on, as women usually do under such circumstances. As for Wilson, he was almost equally affected, although he was rather elated at being chosen to act for the paper in such a capacity.

"Wilson very quickly proved himself to be the right man in the right place, and the proprietors congratulated the chief on his choice of a war correspondent. His long absence did not seem to have any effect on Miss Evans' affection for him; in fact I think it rather increased it, than otherwise. She wrote, and sent him books and tobacco and things, by every mail; while on his part, he sent her a letter at every opportunity. She used to carry these about with her, and many a time I caught her reading passages from them, during the intervals of work. Once, when she thought no one was about, I caught her kissing his photo. The war was a long one, owing to the rainy season stopping operations for a time. Thus it happened that a year after Wilson's departure he was still in Ashanti; but Miss Evans' affection for him was apparently as strong as ever.

"Late one night the agencies sent us news of a great British victory which had been won during the day. But, to our surprise, no cable came from Wilson, although he was one of the smartest men at the front.

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Next morning, we found the explanation in the official dispatch—Wilson was among the list of missing. We determined to hush it up, and endeavour to keep it from the ears of his sweetheart. But, that day further particulars came to hand, and the evening papers were full of his story. Wilson had been severely wounded whilst attempting to save the life of a young officer whose horse had been shot under him.

"Miss Evans bought a paper on her way home from the office, and read the news. She gave one little shriek and then fell down on the pavement in a dead faint. I happened to be walking just behind her, so I saw that she was properly attended to and afterwards sent home in a cab.

"She did not appear at the office in the morning, but when we arrived in the evening, the business manager told us that she had just called to resign her situation. She had informed him that it was her intention to leave for Ashanti next day. He had pointed out to her that she could be of very little use out there and had attempted to dissuade her. Finding it to be useless however, he did all in his power to aid her in her project.

"The following morning, we were once more gathered on the railway platform, to say good-bye to another of our number. At seven o'clock that night the *Royal Heron* left port; and Miss Evans was a passenger on board. You all remember what happened to that ill-fated vessel. She went ashore off Cape Finisterre, during a heavy gale, and only seventeen persons were saved. Miss Evans was not among that number: she went down with the ship.

"Five minutes after the arrival of the news of the wreck, we received a cable from Wilson. He stated that he was badly wounded, but that there was every hope of recovery. The war being practically at an end, the rag had no more need of a 'special,' and he was on his way home. I took the two telegrams to the chief. He read them through and then buried his face in his hands and sobbed like a man who has just sustained an irreparable loss. When he looked up again there was a look of mingled fear and agony on his face, such as I never wish to see on the face of living man again. Never afterwards was he the same man as before.

"In due course Wilson arrived. None of us dared to go to the station to meet him. He turned up at the office in the afternoon, and, as the chief had not arrived, went straight to the room where Miss Evans used to work. Her chair was occupied by another. He went upstairs, thinking that perhaps she had been transferred to the 'Editorial.' None of us had come down and the rooms were empty. In the reporter's room however, he found the chief reporter and asked for Miss Evans. He was a new man whom Wilson had never met before. He had heard Wilson's story, but he never thought of connecting it with the man who stood before him.

"'Miss Evans?' he replied. 'Do you mean a typist who used to be engaged in the advertisement department? She's not here now.'

"'Not here! How's that? Why did she leave?' demanded Wilson.

"'It's rather a sad story,' replied the unsuspecting chief reporter. 'She was engaged to a fellow named Wilson who was sent out to Ashanti as a war correspondent. He was wounded and she determined to go out to him. She sailed in the *Royal Heron* and was—— Why what's the matter with you, are you ill?' But Wilson had rushed from the office without replying.

"Next day the paper contained an account of the suicide of its unfortunate war correspondent."

"And the chief?" asked Prior.

"Resigned his position and accepted a berth as editor of a rag, somewhere in the Straits Settlements," answered Whiteley. "I have never heard about him since."

Harry Flisher.

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Briton or Boer?

By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

INTRODUCTION.

For years past Britain and the Transvaal have been spoiling for a fight, and it was left to that well-known author, Mr. George Griffith, to write this strong and exciting serial nearly four years ago graphically describing a huge war between the two countries.

The story, coming so soon after the Jameson Raid, was read with unusual interest.

Now that Briton and Boer are in deadly conflict it will be interesting to read the story, and see how far the imagination of the author has actually come true.

CHAPTER XXII.

A Facer from the Sea.

In order to keep in touch with the events which were happening in such rapid succession, and in such widely separated parts of the southern portion of the African continent, it will be necessary to once more shift the scene from the interior to the sea-coast, and therefore I shall have to ask the reader to be good enough to avail himself of the special facilities of travel conferred by the good-natured Genius of Fiction, and transport himself from Elandsfontein Junction to Delagoa Bay, while Commander Robertson and the other leaders of the Outlander exodus from Johannesburg are making the necessary dispositions for what may perhaps be fittingly called the hundred mile railway battle which lay before them.

As soon as Admiral Dale had received the direct dispatch

Struck the first blow against the Boers on Transvaal soil.

from Downing Street, the contents of which he had communicated to the council of war assembled in his room on board the *Majestic*, he had instructed Lieutenant Ferris to cable it to General Goodenough, at Cape Town, together with a dispatch announcing the surrender of the Russian squadron and the capture of the German merchantmen in Delagoa Bay. To this he added a private telegram in cipher informing the General that, under existing circumstances, it would be impossible for him to immediately obey the first cablegram which had been sent from Cape Town, and strongly urging that Rear-Admiral Rawson, in command of the regular South African Squadron, should at once make every possible provision for watching the ports, and preventing any vessels from leaving or entering them until a personal conference became practicable.

He next ordered the *Victorious*, with the cruisers *Endymion* and *Grafton*, and the destroyers *Boxer* and *Bruiser*, to cruise off the land at a distance of thirty miles from Inyack Island, in order to intercept any hostile fleet which, as Admiral Tcherkov had hinted, might possibly be advancing from the north on Delagoa Bay.

Prior to this, however, he had made a general draft on the *personnel* of the fleet for the formation of the Naval Brigade, to whose doings Prince Regna had alluded at dinner on New Year's Eve. This consisted of 250 marines, and 100 bluejackets, with two twelve-pounder field guns, two three-pounder Nordenfeldts, and three Maxims. It was this force which, with 250 men of the Leicestershire Regiment under Captain Pearson, had been sent by train across the deadly, low-lying Fever Country—the belt of land which lies between the Transvaal border and the coast—to strike the first blow that was actually struck against the Boers on Transvaal soil.

Thanks to the prompt cutting of the telegraph wires and seizure of the rolling-stock in Lorenco Marques, the expedition reached the border before the Boers had anytime to mass in sufficient numbers to make any effective opposition.

The country through which the railway runs across the border is of an exceedingly difficult nature from the point of view of an attacking force, and had it been adequately defended there might have been great difficulty in achieving what was accomplished. The Lebongo Mountains, which form the natural boundary between the two territories, divide in a somewhat narrow valley through which the line passes for some miles along the Koomati River, which is crossed on the Transvaal side by a long iron bridge.

The river is broken up by broad and, in flood time, as it was now, impassable rapids, and the slopes of the mountains are broken into steep terraces and strewn with rocks and boulders. They, in fact, present a series of natural fortifications, which could be held by a few hundred well-equipped men provided with proper artillery against a force of ten or twenty times their strength. If the Boers had sufficient warning to give them time to cross the Portuguese frontier as they undoubtedly would have done, and pull up the rails on the eastern side of the mountains, so as

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to force the British to fight their way through the valley, the undertaking would have been a very serious one, indeed.

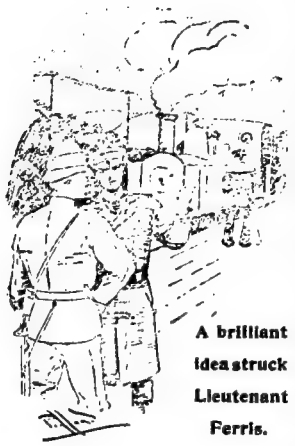
But happily the promptness with which the Admiral had acted had precluded this, and the two trains, carrying the marines and bluejackets, had actually crossed the frontier, cleared the bridge, and got to work on Transvaal soil before the alarm had had time to reach the capital. This had consumed the remainder of the day of 17th, and the greater part of the night.

On the morning of the 18th, a force of about fifteen hundred Boers, hurriedly collected from the sparsely populated country, had assembled at Raapmuiden Junction, and reinforcements had been telegraphed for up the line to Middleburg and Pretoria. The telegrams, dispatched in a moment of panic, had conveyed the astounding if utterly exaggerated news that a great British fleet had taken possession of Delagoa Bay and landed an army of several thousand men, which had crossed the frontier, and was advancing in hot haste on Pretoria, and it was this intelligence which had made the alarmed burghers upset the plans of the Government by insisting upon all the available forces in the north and east of the Republic being concentrated along the railway route from the capital to the frontier.

This, although not exactly forseen by Admiral Dale, was exactly what he would have wished to bring about, and Captain Pearson, who, jointly with Captain Vivian of the Marines, had command of the expedition, grasped the situation at once. It should be mentioned here, by-the-way, that the Admiral had given the command of the bluejackets to Lieutenant Ferris by way of consolation for what he had lost in the *Thrasher*.

Without giving the Boers any time to put their usual tactics into practice, the two British captains shelled Raapmuiden the moment that it became light enough to train the guns, detrained their men under cover of the shell-fire, and then took them in with the bayonet. But before this, and while it was still dark, the bluejackets had occupied the slopes to the south of the line, and planted a Maxim on a little hill which commands both the main line and the Barberton branch.

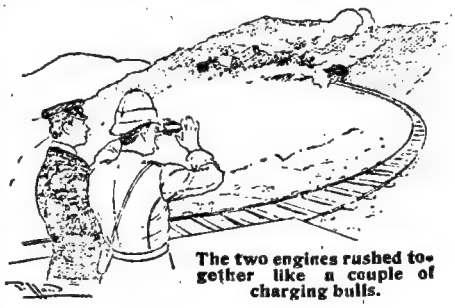
It was the first time that Boers and bluejackets had ever met in fight, and, as Mr. Secretary Leyds had said, the Boers didn't understand the bluejackets a bit. Instead of allowing them to entrench themselves behind the stones and then charging up to their rifle-muzzles, as the red-coats had done in the war of '80 and '81, these strange creatures, active as monkeys and fierce as tigers, had scattered and come on in little rushes of twos and threes and half-dozens, taking advantage of every rock and stone, and shooting only at close quarters and with disgusting precision.



A brilliant idea struck Lieutenant Ferris.

The light was not good enough for long shots, for the attack of the bluejackets had purposely been made before dawn, so that by the time day broke the Boers, who had attempted to take up positions on the slopes and about the railway embankments, found themselves out-flanked by their strange antagonists, and exposed, whenever they showed themselves in any considerable numbers, to the sweeping fire of the Maxim on the hill.

Four times with dogged valour they attempted to storm the hill, and four times they had to retire before the storm of bullets, which swept down every man who showed himself. At length, towards midday, they came to the conclusion that the game was not quite worth the candle. They had neither artillery or machine-guns, and the *rooineks* had both, so they decided to retire into the hills towards Krokodilpoort and wait for reinforcements from Middleburg before driving the insolent English back into the sea.



The two engines rushed together like a couple of charging bulls.

It so happened that just as they were in full retreat a long train emerged from the hills about six miles away, and came swinging rapidly down the line. The two twelve-pounders were immediately got into position, one on each of the station platforms, and fire was opened on the advancing train while the British force was re-embarking in its own train. Shell after shell burst near the advancing Boer train, but it was too far off and advancing too rapidly for accurate shooting.

Then a brilliant idea struck Lieutenant Ferris. A Netherlands Railway engine which had brought a detachment of Boers down from the Barberton district was still in the station with steam up. He went to Captain Pearson and said, pointing to it:

"There's an engine we don't want. Why not start it off full speed up the line on its own account, and let them smash? That will stop them if anything will."

"Bravo, Ferris!" replied Captain Pearson, patting him on the shoulder. "That's the very thing. Go and tell a couple of your fellows to stoke her up all she'll stand, have our train backed out of the way to let her pass, and then send her off."

It was a job after the men's own hearts. They backed the engine off the branch line, and on to the main line, piling in the coal and raking up the furnace until the steam began to roar out of the safety valve. Then they got two iron "chairs," weighing about a hundredweight each, lashed them together, hung them over the valve, and then threw the throttle-valve open and jumped off.

The engine puffed and snorted furiously, and started off with a series of quick bucking jumps, and then, as one of the marines put it, she settled down to her stride, and went up the slope like a Derby winner.

Soldier and sailor alike held his breath and waited for the smash, and the retreating Boers stared open-mouthed and wild-eyed at the atrocity that these strange devils from the sea had been guilty of. As for those on the train, they had neither time nor space to do anything in particular. Their engine, with the heavily-loaded carriages behind it, had been swinging down the incline at a speed that made sudden stoppage impossible and jumping off a matter of imminent risk to life and limb.

Meanwhile the other engine was gaining in speed at every yard. Brakes were put hard down, but the train slid on with terrible velocity in the midst of a cloud of sparks and smoke. The engine-driver and stoker jumped for their lives, and the men began swarming out of the carriages on to the foot-boards.

Then the crash came.

The two engines rushed together like a couple of charging bulls; then they reared up on end and fell over on their sides, and the carriages, crushed and telescoped into each other, reeled in a confused mass of wreckage off the line,

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and rolled down the long embankment with their shrieking, struggling loads of maimed and dying.

"I don't quite know if one could call that war strictly according to Cocker," said Captain Pearson, as he took his glasses from his eyes.

"Perhaps not," said Lieutenant Ferris; "but, anyhow, it's stopped the beggars, and we can't afford to give them any chances."

"That's just what I think," said Captain Vivian drily, "and besides, why shouldn't you ram a train as well as a cruiser or a battleship, especially when you can do it without hurting yourself, as the rammer generally does."

While the engine had been charging up the line the two twelve-pounders had been rapidly limbered up and hoisted into their respective waggons. The train was then drawn well out of the station, and two mines, which a party of sappers attached to the Leicestershire Regiment had been busy laying under the station platforms and buildings, were exploded. The junction was completely wrecked, the lines torn up and the embankment destroyed.

This serious blow was struck with complete success and very little loss of life at a point forty-five miles inside the Transvaal from the Portuguese border; but it was by no means the only one, for the object of the expedition was to absolutely sever the Republic from the sea on the side on which it had so far had the only access to be obtained without passing through British territory.

As the train returned towards the border every bridge and conduit-crossing was destroyed, and finally the great bridge across the Koomati, at its junction with the Krokodil, was utterly demolished. Heavy dynamite charges were put into both the end-bastions and each of the piers, and in a few seconds the simultaneous explosions undid the work of months, and the isolation of the Republic was complete.

The building of a rough but very strong fort, which absolutely commanded the junction of the two rivers, was then immediately put in hand. Gangs of black labourers were brought up in train loads from the coast, and the very guns and ammunition which the German steamers, seized in Delagoa Bay, had brought for the service of the Transvaal, were used in furnishing it.

The building of this fortress, in a practically impregnable position, flanked on two sides by broad rivers broken by rapids, and swarming with crocodiles, situated in a country in which neither horse nor ox can live, and having complete and rapid communication with the base on the coast, was, as the event proved, a work of the very first importance in its bearings on the future fortunes of the war, and when it was finished the keyhole of Africa was definitely plugged for the time being.

"If the Cape were only loyal we could snap our fingers."

The moral effect of the striking of this swift and effective blow was also very great. For the first time in the sad and shameful history of their conflicts, the Briton had met and decisively thrashed the Boer. The tradition of invincibility was broken; reinforcements, withdrawn from the other frontiers, came down in thousands to meet the great British army which had no existence—only to find themselves confronted by the impassable rivers and the impregnable forts beyond, and to be speedily driven back by the terrible Tsetse fly and the unsparing malarial fevers.

On the 22nd of December Admiral Dale, having made the necessary arrangements for joining hands with the British forces in the north, left the battleship *Victorious*, with the cruisers *Endymion*, *Edgar*, and *Grafton*, and the destroyers, *Boxer*, *Bruiser*, and *Ferret*, as a squadron of observation and occupation behind him in Delagoa Bay, steamed south with the rest of his force and the Russian prizes to Capetown to confer with General Goodenough and Rear-Admiral Rawson, on the details of the general scheme of defence and possibly of retaliation, which had been gradually forming in his mind.

When he dropped anchor in Table Bay on the morning of the 30th, the General came off to the flag-ship to welcome him, and almost the first words that he said when he and the Admiral were alone were:

"I'm afraid we can't expect any more help from home, but the other colonies evidently don't mean to stand by and see the Dutchmen smash us. Five thousand Australians are embarking at Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, and ten thousand more are getting ready to come. Canada promises five thousand men and horses as soon as they can be got across the Pacific, and—better than all, I might almost say—I've had a cable from Sir Charles Warren telling me that he has resigned his Indian appointment, and is coming over to help us. Believe me, the Boers would rather hear of ten thousand troops being landed than of that one man coming."

CHAPTER XXIII.

How Matters Stood at the Cape.

"That's good news, indeed," said Admiral Dale heartily. "That man will be worth an army to us. It isn't everyone that loves him, I know, and he's not been altogether well treated at home, but there's one thing certain—the worse enemy a man is of England's, the worse he hates Charles Warren. We shall see that when we get to Pretoria."

"Pretoria!" echoed General Goodenough, with a grave smile. "My dear Dale, Pretoria is a very long way off Cape Town just now. I'm afraid, if the truth must be told, it's a good deal shorter distance from Pretoria to Cape Town. You take my meaning, of course?"

"Oh, certainly," said the Admiral, with a laugh. "You mean that the Dutchmen are more than half way here already."

"My dear fellow, they *are* here," said the Colonel, with a gesture of disgust. "If the Cape were only loyal we could snap our fingers at the Boers, but the whole place is honeycombed with disloyalty and treason. That's the plain fact of it. Indeed, if I had not been able to persuade the High Commissioner to proclaim martial law throughout the whole Colony the moment we heard the news from the North, and if Lawson and I had not taken very prompt measures in manning the forts and bringing the *St. George* round into the bay, and then issuing a proclamation stating that at the first armed rising we would shell the town, the Cape peninsula would by this time no longer be English ground. It was a terribly strong measure, but it frightened them."

"And, therefore, the very thing to do," said the Admiral, "One has to take one's gloves off to do this kind of work, and we shall have our coats off, too, before it's over. But now tell me the rest of the news. I'm about a fortnight behind, you know, except for what I've heard by cable. What did you do after the proclamation?"

"The first thing we did," said the General, "was to issue another one calling upon all male citizens between the ages of twenty and sixty, who intended to remain loyal to the flag, to enrol themselves as volunteers within forty-eight hours, and proclaiming all who failed to respond to the call as traitors to the Crown, and subject to the penalties of treason. All who appeared with arms in their hands

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A confused mass of wreckage rolled down the long embankment.

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without authority, after the date of the proclamation were to be treated as rebels against the Queen's authority, and as such subject to summary conviction by court-martial, which would entail the punishment of death, and confiscation of property.

"The Governor of Natal, I may say, issued an almost identical proclamation at the same time. The effect of this, coupled with the knowledge that every town on the peninsula was at our mercy, as I say, stopped a general rising of the Dutch. About fifteen thousand burghers responded, and we are arming them as rapidly as possible, but we are terribly short of good rifles and amunition."

"The time for talk has gone past."

"Ah, then you'll be glad to hear," the Admiral interrupted with a reassuring smile, "that I've brought you a nice little present from Delagoa Bay. We collared no less than three German steamer-loads of weapons and ammunition intended for the Transvaal. I've got about twelve thousand brand-new Mauser rifles of the Martini pattern—very like our Martini-Metfords, you know, but a trifle bigger calibre—and I should say a couple of million rounds of ammunition for them, and I've got Maxims, Nordenfeldts, Gatlings, and Hotchkisses, Krupp field guns, and shot and shell to any amount, I might almost say, so if you've got the men there won't be much trouble about the arms. What about the other fellows? Surely there ought to be more than fifteen thousand men in all Cape Colony capable of bearing arms. I should have thought there were three times that number."

"So there are," said the General, gravely, "and that is the most serious part of the business, although your good news happily makes it much less serious. Most of the inland towns I regret to say are Dutch, and disloyal almost to a man. We know how terribly mistaken, to use the mildest possible term, was the policy which forced us here to sit still and watch these fellows arming themselves with the best kinds of rifles, buying out the gun-shops in fact, with money that we were practically certain came from the Transvaal, while we never took any measures even to strengthen our own volunteer force, or to give the men we had better weapons.

"The consequence is that we know there must be some forty or fifty thousand men who have not responded to the proclamation, and are simply keeping dark with arms in their possession, safely hidden away somewhere, and waiting quietly for the Free State to move. The moment that happens they'll be up and out in regularly organised commandoes—for all that has been going on, too, right under our very noses."

"Oh, then the Free State has not moved yet? How's that?" said the Admiral with lifted eye-brows. "That's a pleasant surprise. I quite expected when we got here to hear that they had crossed the frontier in thousands, and had probably overrun the whole north of the Colony."

"There are probably several reasons for that," said the General. "Some of them are plain to me, others I confess I don't understand. The first is undoubtedly the Basutos. The moment that the Transvaal declared war Lerothodi sent messages to Maritzburg and here, telling us that in three days he would have twenty thousand warriors ready to move if we wanted them, and he told us, too, that he had sent a message to Bloemfontein, telling the Free State President that he had heard that the Dutch were going to eat up the English, and when they had done that they could eat up his country too. He said he didn't want war with anyone, but if there was going to be war his people would fight, and they would not fight for the Dutch.

"This was checkmate to the Free Staters so far as their south-eastern border was concerned, for those Basutos are perfect demons to fight, and no one knows it better than they do.

"Then again, the De Beers people have turned up perfect trumps. The moment the news reached them the Directors met and voted a war-fund of a million. Nearly every man turned out with a rifle of some sort, and those who didn't were promptly clapped into gaol and kept there. They shut the mines down, and turned all the niggers who hadn't run away on to throwing up earthworks. I rushed three Maxims and a couple of 7-pounders, which I had to take out of the ships, up to them by train, and within a couple of days they had the place almost fortified. They have a magnificent staff, you know, and it's organised like an army. Well, that was check number two.

"Our taking the bull by the horns so promptly here was probably check number three. Your appearance in Delagoa Bay was number four. What I don't quite understand is, how the general rising of the Dutch throughout South Africa, which was evidently planned by Leyds and his colleagues, missed fire, as it certainly did. There must have been some disagreement between the Transvaal and the Free State, and, of course, something quite unexpected may possibly have happened in the North."

"At the same time," said the Admiral, as the General paused for a moment, "I suppose, as a matter of fact, we should recognise that the North is lost, at any rate for the present?"

"I'm not at all so sure of that," said the General. "Of course, the Boers have the whole frontier and the railway down almost as far as Fourteen Streams. That's the point, you know, where the big railway bridge is near to the junction of the three frontiers. Of what has happened in Rhodesia we, of course, know nothing. We have had no news whatever since the 16th. Still, Carrington is not the man to be eaten in a mouthful. He has some splendid fellows with him, and I've a sort of notion that he'll be a very tough nut for the Boers to crack. However, it is unfortunately true that we must leave him and the North out of our calculations for the present. What we have to do is to look after the Colony and Natal."

"And the coast!" added the Admiral. "By-the-way, is there any news from home?"

"Nothing more than you know already, I'm afraid. You see, you have the cables on the east coast; we have none on the west, and the mail service stopped a week ago. The last news we had was by the *Moor*, and that of course was a fortnight old when she got here. We've stopped all mail communications, now in accordance with the arrangements you made from Delagoa Bay, but I suppose in view of this cable from Australia we may as well open communications that way.

"Oh, yes, of course, and with Canada *viâ* Vancouver and New Zealand as well," said the Admiral. "It certainly looks as though we in South Africa have to fight this business out either on our own resources or with what help we may get from the other colonies, and we certainly can't afford to do without any help that they can give us. The coast we have absolutely at command so far. When we get these Russian ships refitted and manned, I think Rawson and I can guarantee that nothing, armed or unarmed, shall come into or leave any South African port without our knowledge and consent. That you can rely upon absolutely.

"I ought to have told you, by-the-way, that I have sent a strong force of marines and the Leicestershire men, under Captain Pearson, convoyed by a couple of cruisers, up to

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Beira, to join Carrington and bring him out of the country, if possible. I take it that we want him and his men in Natal, or here, much more than in the North. Rhodesia must take care of itself for the present."

"Exactly," said the General. "At present we here can only stand on the defensive, and watch the enemy on our own ground till the Australians and Canadians arrive. If it wasn't for that infernal Africander Bond and its understanding with the Transvaal and Free State Governments, the work would be comparatively easy."

Here the General looked at the clock, and got up from his chair, and went on:

"But dear me, I've been quite forgetting how time is getting on. We are to have a Council of War at the Government House in less than an hour's time. You had better come ashore with me and we'll thrash the whole thing out there. Between ourselves, Rawson and I have been urging the High Commissioner to dissolve the Cape Parliament by proclamation. At the sitting last night some of those Bond fellows—Du Toit, Malan, Merryman, Bauer, and others of the sort—had the cheek to get up and make speeches which, under the circumstances, were absolutely seditious, though I am glad to say the majority was entirely against them.

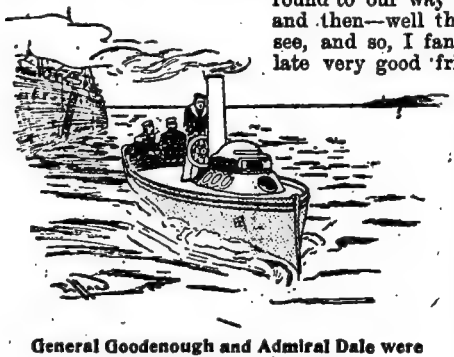
"Now, between ourselves, that sort of stuff may be all very well in times of peace, but when war's declared and the country is under martial law, it won't do at all. I think these fellows ought to be impeached, and, if necessary, put under lock and key. That's what I'm going to propose, at any rate, and if you'll agree with me I shall be glad if you'll come with me and support me."

"With the greatest pleasure," said Admiral Dale, rising from his seat. "I take it that the time for talk has gone past, and if we only had Sir Charles here just now, I'm perfectly certain that he would be the first man to agree with me."

"Save one," said the General, putting out his hand. "Let me be the first. I am glad to see that we are in such perfect accord."

"This is not the sort of time for people like us to differ, my dear General," said Admiral Dale as their hands joined. "If we don't stand together, who the deuce is going to save South Africa from the Boers, I should like to know?"

"Exactly," replied the General, "now let us get ashore and go to work. With allies like you and Rawson, who fortunately thinks just as we do, I don't think I shall have very much difficulty in bringing his Lordship entirely round to our way of thinking, and then—well then we shall see, and so, I fancy, will our late very good friends, President Kruger and his hyper-sensitive Boers who pretended to think that we were going to conquer the Transvaal last spring with about five hundred troops."



General Goodenough and Admiral Dale were seated in the steam pinnace.

"Very well," said the Admiral, "I am entirely at your service, and as long as it is a question of fighting as opposed to talking, you can rely upon my being at one with you right through. My own idea is practically identical with yours—to dissolve Parliament forthwith, with the consent of the loyal majority, constitute a Council of Colonial Defence of not more than seven members, including his Lordship as titular chairman, invite Natal to do the same, join forces, and have community of action in all things and think of nothing whatever but tackling the common enemy. We must leave all inter-colonial differences to be settled when this business is over. If we don't do that we can be pretty well certain that the Boers will settle them for us."

The great junction had ceased to exist save as a wilderness of ruins.

Within ten minutes General Goodenough and Admiral Dale were seated in the stern-sheets of the *Majestic's* steam pinnace, an their way to take part in the Council of War, on the decision of which the fate of British rule in South Africa to all intents and purposes depended.

CHAPTER XXIV.

War on Wheels.

Heilfberg is one of the most important centres of communication in the Transvaal, as it is the meeting place of four of the great waggon-transport tracks, in addition to being a station on the direct railway route between the Rand and Natal. Commander Robertson clearly foresaw that here the first big battle would have to be fought, and that unless he moved very quickly the Boers would gather there in overwhelming force, and effectually bar his way to the South. He had nothing to fear from the North for several hours, since no troops or guns could be brought down by train, nor could orders be sent south by telegraph.

For any considerable number of troops to be moved from Pretoria upon Elandsfontein or Germiston with field or machine-guns, it would take at the very least a matter of twelve or fifteen hours. For the mounted Boers, armed with nothing but their rifles, he had very little concern, for he knew that they would give the trains a respectfully wide berth as soon as they found that they were armed with machine-guns. The line, too, runs almost the whole way to the border over the open High Veld, and as long as the guns worked, no troops could get within striking distance of the trains. With many strong and willing hands at command, the train-convoys were rapidly got into both travelling and fighting shape. There were three of them, not counting the one which had been sent on under Captain Mellish to Germiston and Heidelberg. The first was a fighting train, consisting entirely of trucks protected with three or four thicknesses of corrugated iron. This was mainly loaded with guns and ammunition. Two maxims and a seven-pounder were mounted on the first and last trucks, the others were occupied by about a thousand men, who might be regarded as the front division of Commander Robertson's little army.

The second train followed this at a distance of about a

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mile. It was composed almost entirely of the big Cape Government railway saloons in which the women and children were stowed away as comfortably as might be under the circumstances. An iron-guarded truck at each end carried a Maxim and a Gatling, the cross-fire of which would be quite sufficient to prevent any living being coming near the train.

He trained his Maxim on the detachment of Boers.

The third train was a composite one. It had a string of armed trucks in front and in the rear, and a long line of saloons and compartment carriages in the middle for the accommodation of the remainder of the women and children. It had two seven-pounders and two maxims mounted ahead, and one seven-pounder and a three-pound quick-firing Nordenfeldt and a Hotchkiss mounted to the rear.

All three trains carried strong parties of men accustomed to railway work, with picks, shovels, and crow-bars and other necessary tools to repair and relay the line in case it should be found to be torn up by the Boers.

The dawn was just beginning to steal, grey and cold, over the bare, bleak, High Veld, when the first of the three trains moved slowly out of the station. As soon as it was clear of the points, the second, with a heavy Cape engine in front and a Netherland twelve-wheeled locomotive behind, followed it. Then came the third and heaviest train, with two Netherland engines ahead and a big Cape one in the middle between the trucks and the saloons.

Outside the station the mounted men were drawn up into two parties of about five hundred each, and as the first train pulled out on the Veld they went away with it at the best speed of their horses to join the advanced guard at Germiston.

The two divisions of horse were under the command of Captains Maclure and Nesbitt. Commander Robertson rode on the rear train, but kept in touch with the others by means of a simple system of whistle-signals which he had arranged with the officers he had chosen to take charge of them. The first of these was Captain Edward James, late of the Royal Engineers, and "No. 2" was under the command of Lieutenant Draper, of the Cape Volunteer Artillery, who happened to be on a visit to Johannesburg on the fatal 16th of December, and had not been able to get back in consequence of the closing of the lines.

When the last train was clear of the station a couple of truck-loads of dynamite, for which no other use could be found, were run into the middle of it, a detonator with a ten-minute fuse was attached to one of them, and the three trains went on their way at the best speed practicable. At the end of the ten minutes the fate that had befallen Fordsburg in February overwhelmed the junction of Elandsfontein.

A huge chasm was dug right in the midst of the station, buildings and fragments of platforms, bits of trucks and wheels were sent flying far and wide through the air, rails and sleepers were torn up and rent and twisted up into the most grotesque shapes, and within a few seconds the great junction and *entrepôt* of the Transvaal had ceased to exist save as a wilderness of ruins.

As the roar of the explosion, and the crashing of the shattered structures and falling fragments of wreckage died away behind them, the sound of firing came up the lines from Germiston. The first train immediately ran on ahead of the horse, and as Captain James came within sight of the junction, he saw that a considerable body of Boers, apparently some seven or eight hundred, had come in from the west, and were making a determined effort to get possession of the telegraph office before the wires could be cut down on either side of it.

He also saw that about a third of them were trying to fight their way round across the line leading to the Free State, evidently with the object of pulling up the rails on the Natal line, and so blocking all further progress to the South. The moment he found how matters were going, he ordered his engineer to whistle loudly for the cavalry to come up. Then he backed his train out clear of the station so as to get his guns to bear more effectively on the town in case it might be necessary to shell it, and meanwhile trained his Maxims on the detachment of the Boers attacking the station, which was held by about a hundred of the advanced guard under cover of the machine guns in the trucks.

The Boers who had ridden into Germistown were under the command of Captain Sarel Eloff, President Kruger's grandson—who, it will be remembered, had been the first to ride out to meet Jameson and his raiders and who had also been one of the principal witnesses at the celebrated trial.

Although a youth of little more than twenty, he was one of the smartest officers in the service of the Republic; tall big-boned and handsome, though his good looks were of a somewhat saturnine sort, strong as a horse and as brave as a bulldog—a straight-shooting, hard-riding specimen of the best kind of Boer that has so far been evolved.

Since his return from England he had been in charge of the Police of the Krügersdorp District, and as soon as Commandant Schutte's men had seen that matters in Johannesburg were going to be really serious, about fifty of them had galloped out of the town over the mines towards Roodepoort, where Captain Eloff happened to be just then, and gave him the news that the English in Johannesburg had risen; that the Kaffirs were loose; and that the town was being shelled.

Captain Eloff reasoned rapidly and, from his point of view, correctly that plenty of men could be brought from Pretoria to deal with any riots if the batteries failed to overawe the rioters, and that, even if they could fight their way out of the town, the only possible chance of escape lay along the Natal line.

He called his men out of the station and embarked them on the trains.

He had, therefore, dispatched every available man hither and thither through his district to summon the burghers out at once and tell them to concentrate at Germistown at the earliest possible moment, and this they had done with the wonderful celerity of preparation and movement, which

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is one of the most formidable of the Boers' fighting qualifications. As soon as they saw that help had come in force, Captain Mellish did the very thing he ought to have done under the circumstances.

He called his men out of the station, re-embarked them in the trucks, and started off down the line to head off the other party of Boers. He saw that his first duty was to keep the line clear and that his second was to stop the news getting to Heidelberg.

When the Boers saw his men scrambling back into the truck they uttered a loud shout of triumph, and, before their clear-sighted commander could stop them, made a rush for the abandoned station.

The next instant the two seven-pounders on Captain James's train, one loaded with shrapnel and the other with common shell, opened fire on the telegraph office, while the Maxims began to spread their storms of bullets along the line in both directions and through the streets of the town. The station buildings were ablaze within a few minutes, the telegraph office was a wreck, and all danger of communication was at an end so far as Germiston was concerned.

As soon as he saw that this had been accomplished, Captain James ran his train ahead out of the way of the sparks that were beginning to fly about from the burning buildings. Captain Eloff, on his side, saw that nothing could now be done to save the situation. There was no means of telegraphing either up or down for help, and the Free State line had been wrecked by the advance guard of the Johannesburgers before he got to the junction. He therefore called his men out and made a determined effort to pull up the rails behind the second train in case any more might be coming along. Here he was right again, but time was against him.

Before his men had got to work "No. 2" came thundering down the line, shaking the earth under its enormous weight. It rushed through the burning station at a speed of over thirty miles an hour, and as it came on the Maxims on the forward trucks opened fire on either side. Two of the Boers were caught on the line and mangled out of all human likeness under the wheels of the engine. The rest scampered away from the metals as fast as their legs would carry them.

A score or so of them went down under the Maxim bullets, and the others halted a couple of hundred yards off and poured a vicious but almost harmless volley into the train as it swept past. The next minute it was out of range, but now the two bodies of the Johannesburg Horse came tearing through the town each side of the line at full gallop to get their share of the sport.

This was much more in the Boers' line than fighting trains. Every man pulled up and dismounted where he stood, the next minute the deadly rifles began to crack all round the advancing columns, and saddle after saddle was emptied, and horse after horse, mortally wounded, came crashing with his rider to the earth.

Captains Nesbitt and Maclure were struck by the same idea at the same moment. By voice and gesture they told their troops to scatter, and led them off from the line at a gallop. Then they swung round at about half a mile from the railway. As they did so "No 3" came spinning down the line in the midst of a storm of smoke and flame from the machine-guns and ran clean through a body of the Boers who had ridden in to take possession of the line.

This was altogether too much for the worthy burghers. This was the fourth train, loaded with armed men and vomiting death and destruction on all sides of it, that had come, apparently from nowhere, to destroy them.

"*Allemachtig!*" they cried, staring blankly at each other "This is the British army that has come up from Delagoa. They say there are thousands of them. There are not enough of us, let us go!"

And they went, at least as many of them as could get away, as fast as their horses could carry them, to await a more favourable opportunity of fighting the Rooineks.

(To be continued.)

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "Athelstone Ford," by Allen Upward, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. F. W. Finch, of 11, Avon Terrace, Leicester Causeway, Coventry. Attempts for this week's prize may deal with ANY SUBJECT and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, April 30th. Post-cards only, please.

The Difference.

A FEW evenings ago a small party of townsmen were assembled in an hotel smoke-room, discussing the all-absorbing question of the war, when one of them asked:

"What is the difference between the British soldiers at Bloemfontein and the unfortunate fellows who are prisoners at Pretoria?"

After several attempts were made unsuccessfully to solve the conundrum, they gave it up.

"Well, I will explain the difference," said the questioner. "The British soldiers at Bloemfontein are absent-minded beggars, while those at Pretoria are absent beggars minded."

F. W. F.

Invitations Ceased.

A FAMOUS pianist was once invited to dinner by a wealthy man, who was the owner of a large boot factory, and had been a shoemaker in his time.

After the repast the musician was requested to play something, and he consented.

Not long afterwards the pianist invited the manufacturer, and after dinner handed him a pair of old boots.

"What am I to do with these?" asked the rich man in astonishment.

With a genial smile, the musician replied:

"Why, the other day you asked me to play a little music for you, and now I ask you to mend these boots for me. Each to his trade, you know."

E. M.

Alarming.

NOT only the horses of the Mexicans, but whatever property belonging to them you admire is yours. If you express a sentiment of approbation of anything, the owner at once says: "Señor, it is yours"; but he simply intends something flattering, and are therefore, not expected to accept anything that is offered to you.

An amusing story is told of an English official, which illustrates how this national courtesy often provokes embarrassment. The gentleman was walking in the park, when he met a nurse girl with a bright-eyed baby. Being fond of children, he stopped to admire the little one, and asked whose child it was.

"Señor, it is your own," replied the nurse with a curtsy.

The official beat a hasty retreat.

W. H.

Not a Grammarian.

To a waiter belongs the proud distinction of uttering what is probably the most ungrammatical sentence ever evolved from the brain of illiterate man. One afternoon an old man took his seat at the table and gave his usual order to a newly employed knight of the napkin.

"Waiter," he said, as the dishes were put before him, "this beef isn't sufficiently underdone."

With a smile of contempt the servitor bore the viands back to the kitchen window and returned a moment later without having changed them.

"I'm very sorry, sir," he said, "but we ain't got no beef what's no underdoner!"

E. P.

Scathing.

A MEMBER of a fashionable club in London lost his umbrella. Being resolved to draw attention to the matter in an effective manner, he caused this notice to be put up in the hall:

"The nobleman who took away an umbrella not his own on such a date is requested to return it."

The committee took offence at this statement, and summoned the member who had made it before them.

"Why, sir," they inquired, "should you have supposed that a nobleman had taken your umbrella?"

"Well," replied the member, "the first article in the club rules says that 'This club is to be composed of noblemen and gentlemen,' and since the person who stole my umbrella could not have been a gentleman, he must have been a nobleman."

W. S. T.

He Wanted a Nice Picture.

A LOCAL photographer tells a story of a young man who came into the studio one day and asked nervously if he might have a little conversation with him.

The visitor was painfully ugly, and, after some awkward blushing and indefinite allusions, he asked the artist if he supposed he had among his samples a picture of any young man who looked like him, but was better-looking.

"What do you mean, young man?" asked the photographer.

"Well," replied he, making a clean breast of it, "I am just engaged to be married. The young lady lives down in Devonshire. She is going home to-morrow. She says she thinks I'm so good she doesn't mind my being homely, but she wants a good-looking picture to take home with her to show the girls."

H. B.

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Properly Sold.

A boy on one of the stations of the Metropolitan Railway, finding the carriages all full up, opened one of the doors and shouted out loudly:

"This train isn't going!"

All the occupants arose and got out, amongst them an old gent with a wooden leg. The boy then jumped into the coveted seat in the corner.

Presently the guard came along, and they all rushed back again, and in the midst of the general indignation he was asked:

"Why did you say this train wasn't going?"

"Well, it wasn't then," replied the boy with a grin, "but it is now!" D. L.

The Two Toasts.

Would-be wits are apt sometimes to have the tables turned upon them.

At a dinner in honour of a gentleman named Nick Denton, one of the staff of a certain railway, his friend, Jack Wallace, entrusted with the toast of the evening, proposed it thus:

"The two Nicks—Old Nick and Nick Denton."

Denton rose to respond, saying he appreciated the honour conferred upon him by connecting him with Mr. Wallace's most intimate friend, and scarcely knew how to return the compliment; but as one good turn deserves another, he would give:

"The two Jacks—Jack Wallace and Jackass!"

W. L.

Is It Likely?

In the course of a recent passage of an ocean greyhound across the Atlantic, two of her passengers, an American and an Englishman, were conversing one day upon sporting subjects.

A casual mention of Hurlingham—the scene of the great pigeon-shooting matches—afforded the American an opportunity for stating that on one particular occasion he had shot nine hundred and ninety-nine pigeons running.

Upon his interlocutor observing that "he might just as well have said a thousand while he was about it," he rejoined:

"Certainly not; I should scarcely tell a lie for the sake of a single pigeon!" A. R. T.

Relief at Last.

The long-suffering man was trying to read, when, with a crash and a roar, the train left the rails. Down, down, down it went. The seat in which the long-suffering man sat shut up like a knife and caught him in its tenacious embrace; another seat rose up and smote him in the side. Two trunks flung themselves upon his breast, and the luggage-rack slid down and poked him in the back. Then all was silent.

The long-suffering man tried to move. One foot, then the other, was found embedded in the *débris*; his arms were securely pinioned by the wreckage. It was dark, and warm, and still.

The long-suffering man nestled his cheek down on the cool surface of a window and heaved a sigh of relief.

"At last," he murmured, "at last those two maniacs in front of me have stopped talking golf."

And a blessed silence reigned.

W. R. S.

Good Enough to Pawn.

The 11th Hussars had arrived in Dublin one day, and their notoriety made them a great attraction.

After a levée at the castle, one of their officers was walking down Sackville Street one beautiful sunny afternoon in the month of July, in his full dress, and he was met by two Irishmen fresh from the interior of the country.

Quite staggered by the glittering and gorgeous apparition clanking towards them, they riveted their eyes on the blazing gold and blue figure, and, with a wondering gaze, the one exclaimed to the other, with a sharp nudge in the ribs, and a look of exquisite fun:

"Begorra, shouldn't I like to pawn him!"

W. B. T.

The Lesser of Two Evils.

A badly-wounded soldier, at present in a South African hospital, objected to his doctor on the ground that he was too young.

"He ain't got a hair on his face,' grumbled Tommy. "I don't want no kids messin' about wi' me."

"Very well, then; I will fetch Dr. Blank to you," said the nurse, mentioning a surgeon who was noted for his drastic methods of treatment.

"The old feller who's so fond o' slashin' arms an' legs off?" queried Tommy anxiously.

"That's the man," replied the nurse.

"Ah, well, I think we'll gi'e t' young 'un a chance," said the soldier, on reflection. "He's nobbut a beginner, an' one or two fingers should satisfy him!"

H. G. A. R.

He Would be Obeyed.

A company of a British regiment was once sent in time of peace on some simple duty to a remote village in Ireland, and left there for several weeks, being quite separated from its usual source of supplies.

During this period some general orders applicable more especially to men in barracks were sent to the commander of the company.

One clause of the orders was to the effect that all the men in the command should change their shirts twice a week.

The captain gave orders to the orderly sergeant to see this command put into execution.

"But, captain," said the sergeant, "there's only a shirt apiece to every man in the company! How can they——"

"Silence!" roared the captain; "orders are orders! Let the men change their shirts with one another."

So the sergeant saw to it that so long as the company remained in the place, on every Sunday and Wednesday mornings the soldiers "swapped" shirts with one another. F. F.

Pearson's Great Coloured War Sheet,

In which various incidents of the War in South Africa are depicted, is a large picture, 40in. by 30in., beautifully printed in many colours. The picture is on sale everywhere, price One Shilling, or it can be obtained from the office of this paper, securely packed in tube, post free for 1s. 4d. Orders should be placed at once, as only a limited number have been printed. The picture is also sold mounted on cloth and rollers, and varnished, at 4s. 6d. A small reproduction of the picture is given on page 542.

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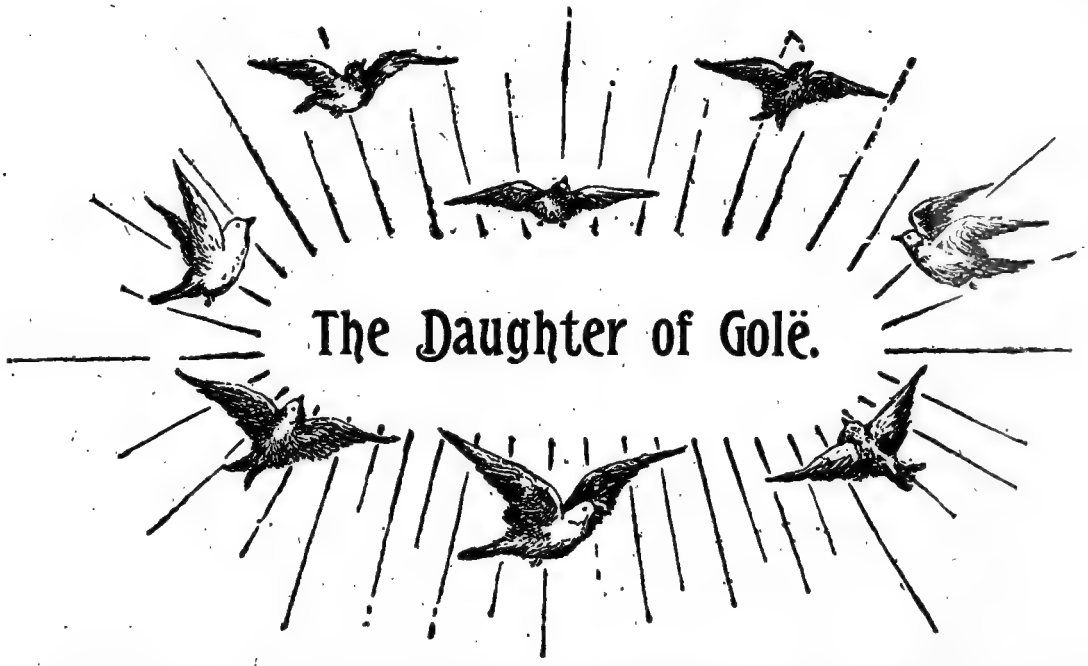

The Daughter of Golë.

In descending the path, Jean Fait Tout pointed out to me, toward the shore, a ruin, gray and dismantled, but still menacing. "Behold the tower of Duard," he said; "and I am going to relate to you, just as I promised, the story of the daughter of Goël. Recall, on your side, the barbarous atrocious custom our lords had of preserving their walls from all destruction by burying in them, alive, a young maiden still a virgin.

"Sir Ronald, mysteriously, had not allowed any but laborers from beyond the sea to work on that tower, although old Goël, the best mason of the country, dwelt in a hut very near by.

"But Goël had a daughter, Phanette, as delicate, pretty, and graceful as a doe, whom Sir Ronald, a base scoundrel, pursued in the meadow, on the beach, behind the hedges, everywhere.

"The poor little one, thanks to her agility, escaped from the lord, but by a miracle; and after the chase, fell on the paternal threshold, trembling and breathless, like a hind at bay.

"Upon which Goël, although only a vassal, carried his grievances before the Duke of Bretagne. Sir Ronald was threatened with excommunication if he did not amend. The lord ceased then to torment Phanette, but he cherished a furious rancour against the mason; not only did he no longer employ him at his works, but he forbade everyone to give him employment.

"One evening, a short time after that, the English masons, having finished the tower, had crossed the sea again. Goël and his wife awaited beside the cold hearth the return of Phanette, who had gone to the village to sell their last clothes.

"They watched by the light of a smoky lamp, which burned before the image of St. Cado. Both were absorbed in their sad thoughts, when someone knocked at the door. Two strangers appeared. With some mystery, they asked if Goël would consent to accompany them to a few miles from the village, and if he would be able to build a wall with his eyes bandaged. At the same time they placed a purse full of gold on the table. The offer did not surprise Goël, because the lords of those times contrived a thousand hiding places, pits, niches and secret caves, wherein to put their riches in safety. Nevertheless he hesitated, imagining foolishly that without their full beards and turned down hats, he could perhaps recognize, in these two strangers, valets or cavaliers of Sir Ronald. But his wife, already putting the purse in the trunk, exclaimed:

"'Go, my man, and return quickly. Phanette will then have come home, and we will all three make a reckoning of our fortune, forming a thousand fine projects for the future.'

"That decided Goël. Hardly was he outside, when the two strangers fastened the bandage firmly over his eyes, and made him swear in the name of St. Cado and under menace of death that he would not remove it himself, whatever might be the strange things that he might hear.

"A superfluous oath, because the broad bandage not only closed his eyes, but also his ears.

"Each of the men then took one of his hands and led him along. By the wind which blew on the nape of his neck, Goël understood that they went away from the shore to enter the valley; but after a hundred turns and windings, which fatigued him and made him lose his bearings, he felt the wind strike him in the face. By that and certain vague indefinable sensations it seemed to him that he was led again towards the village.

"After a new course, the blowing of the wind ceased abruptly, and he felt himself no longer walking on the ground, but on stones; then he stumbled and had to climb steps. Without moving his lips he counted twenty-seven. After this, his two guides made him touch on the right some cut stones and on the left his trowel and mortar; and, in front of him, a very low wall that it was necessary to build up, until the hiding place in it was covered.

"Having his hands free and not feeling anyone near

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him, Goël set himself to work, putting the stones one over the other in just apposition, plastering the interstices, cementing them in such an active and expert fashion that the wall rose quickly. He imagined at first that someone, with a poignard raised over his breast, watched him, awaiting the least movement he made to remove the bandage which rendered him blind and deaf.

"But soon in that profound silence, his thoughts grew calmer and he arrived at the conclusion that he worked all alone in a dark parlour. In his freer movements, he could, by furtive touches, notice that the niche he was closing up grew narrower above into a pointed arch.

"It could have held a statue of natural size and it resembled no other hiding place of treasure. This reflection gave him the desire to stretch out his arm, to touch the gold or the jewels of inestimable value.

"In spite of his danger, he advanced a hand and drew it back quickly, amazed at feeling the texture of cloth instead of the cold contact of gold. Were these, then, precious garments that he was hiding?

"Impunity emboldened him, and a little while after he advanced the hand further, and touched something like the falling folds of a dress, still warm, as if it had only just been removed. Goël, although more anxious, did not stop working.

"The wall already was at the height of his waist, when a drop of water, oozing, doubtlessly, from the wall, fell upon his hand. The little drop was not cold, as it ought to be from water filtered through granite, but warm—almost burning. Instinctively and slyly Goël carried this drop of water to his lips and found it as bitter as a tear. Then other drops fell more abundantly, more burning, on his fevered fingers. He was more and more troubled and yet the wall rose, rose incessantly.

"At one time, under the stuff that he touched, he thought he felt a living warmth, a warmth of flesh, and in the frightful silence before him, at the height of his heart, another heart beating in a desperate fashion. His whole body shuddered, a cold perspiration trickled from his forehead, and nevertheless, faithful to his oath, he placed a large stone against this living thing, which beat like a heart, cemented it and then put others over it.

"Then the little hot drops ceased to fall and he reached the pointed arch at last, when his trowel and fingers became entangled with some light threads, which broke as easily as delicate strands of silk. Adroitly, quickly, Goël rolled a few of these threads around one of his fingers and finished cementing the surface of the arch and of the wall. Then worn out with fatigue and emotion, he dropped his tools and, by an old habit, mechanically passed his hand flatly over the stones, yet moist and fresh, in order to reassure himself that they were united and smooth.

"But at the height of his own breast he felt under his palm, through the thickness of the wall, the same warmth of life, the same wild and terrible beating of a heart in agony. This time the impression was so vivid, so real, that overcome by his feelings, Goël uttered a moan of distress and fell backwards.

"He did not come to himself until long afterwards, aroused by the strong breeze blowing from the sea. His first movement was to tear off the bandage. He found himself lying on the pebbles of the deserted shore, late in the night.

"From a great distance away, by its narrow loophole lighted in red, the tower of Duard seemed to watch him, darting its eye of blood upon him across the mist.

"Staggering still and haunted by a nightmare, Goël regained his hut. On seeing him enter, his wife, who still watched by the light of her smoky lamp, gave a cry of joy.

"But he let himself fall on a bench, moaning:

"'Phanette! Where is Phanette?'

"His wife very pale, had to confess that Phanette had not yet returned.

"At twilight some of Sir Ronald's men had been seen prowling in the meadows of Joburg. The terrified shepherds, hearing a desperate cry from the valley below, which was already quite in darkness, had peered over the top of the rocks, but had seen nothing. Goël asked in a voice trembling with anxiety:

"'Wife, do you know the number of steps one has to climb to reach the door of the tower of Duard?'

"'One counts twenty-seven steps,' answered his wife.

"Goël, in anguish, joined his trembling hands, and in desperation raised them toward the image of St. Cado, which the little smoky lamp lighted.

"On her side the woman uttered a cry:

"'Oh, Goël, Goël; what do I see twined around your finger and shining like gold. One would say they were hairs from the head of our Phanette!'

"Then Goël, sinking against the table, his head in his arms, sobbed:

"'Misfortune has come upon us, O wife; I have buried our child alive in the granite tower!'"

CHARLES FOLEY.

"I MEANT to have told you of that hole," said a host to a friend who had fallen into a pit in his garden.

"No matter," said the friend, "I've found it."

BILL: "I see the clock dealer down the street is selling out."

JILL: "Yes; he told me his business was all run down."

Bill: "And now he proposes to wind it up?"

ETHEL: "Jack was kissing me last night, when papa walked into the drawing-room."

Gracie: "What did he say?"

"He said: 'Sir, this is outrageous!'"

"And Jack?"

"Jack said: 'Yes, isn't it? Kindly oblige me by knocking before you enter the next time.'"

"CHARLEY dear," said young Mrs. Torkins, "the baby is trying to talk again. It's wonderful how he takes after you!"

"What was he talking about?"

"I think it must have been politics. He started very calmly, but in a few minutes he was as angry and red in the face as he could be."

MRS. JENKINS was in the habit of repeating "I say," to almost every sentence she gave utterance.

On one occasion she rang the bell for her footman, and on his entering, she said:

"I say, James, I have been to Mrs. Thompson's, and heard say, that you said that I am in the habit of saying 'I say' to every word I say. Now if I do say 'I say' to every word I say, it does not become you to say that I say 'I say' to every word I say, James."

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The Little Black Imps.

In Berlin the name of Max Müller had been of some account. He was, to begin with, a Müller, which meant much.

As a matter of course, he was an officer in the army—his sisters had starved themselves for his commission and maintenance—and he was handsome, even for a German officer.

Unfortunately for him, he sang the love songs of his country, and they are quite the most moving love songs in the world. They move the singers as well as the listeners. They moved Müller, and on one night in particular when he was bidden to the house of a certain titled lady, he was so lifted out of himself by the charm of his music that he proposed to an English girl who was present, and to his startled dismay was accepted.

It was a misfortune, for he was not in sympathy with the English point of view, he did not like the insistence and arrogance of English women, and he had quite made up his mind to marry a senseless and well-born little *fräulein* who did net work and went to *kaffee klatsches*.

He almost loved her, she was so nondescript, and would be well content to make a harmless background of herself for his benefit.

Moreover, in spite of all his vanity he was rather soft-hearted, and it hurt him to think how many tears would bedew those soft blue eyes when she heard of his engagement to the English girl.

The English girl had, moreover, been known to do things which were shocking. She had gone shopping about the streets of Berlin unaccompanied, she had once used slang before a Weimar professor of philosophy, and she had been heard to say that she did not like the shape of the Emperor's nose, and it was said she made some serious mistakes in her interpretation of the Fifth Symphony.

Yet he married her. And they came to England.

"It is just as well," said his friends sadly. "Really, you know, it is all over with poor Max."

They felt that he was as good as dead.

It was dull in England. Well, London wasn't so bad, perhaps, but the other towns—bah! There wasn't a true city among them. It didn't count for a man to be anybody. No one paid any attention to Max because he was a Müller. It made him bitter. He had a little summer house built at the back of the villa where they lived, and smoked his pipe there and dreamed of Berlin. Also he planted some flowers and some little trees. He liked these and paid much attention to them. He studied a good deal—military tactics and botany. But he neglected to provide the daily bread. No one could blame him for it. It was an oversight on his part. His wife gave music lessons—private lessons and class lessons—and sometimes performed at concerts.

In course of the long and busy years four children were born to Müller, but still the burden of the bread-winning devolved upon madame. She never complained. It was the greatest pleasure in the world for her to return home and find the Baron sitting there. She never saw a man so handsome. And he was always kind.

He was willing—but not eager—to work. Time was apt to hang heavily on his hands. And so it became his habit to amuse himself in a peculiar way—namely, by the making of little black imps. He made them on anything that chanced to be handy—an envelope, a scrap of paper, a playing card, or a book mark.

He represented them in every imaginable antic. He gave them a thousand subtle individualities. His mind appeared to be beset by them.

Many of his acquaintances had wondered in the course of their intercourse with him what it was that filled that large, handsome head. Now they seemed to be finding out.

The little inky imps trooped out of his cranium in such numbers that they threatened to leave it quite void and empty.

The children were growing up, and children cannot do that, no matter how unobstrusive they endeavour to be, without costing someone something.

These children developed talents, and in a utilitarian age talents cannot be allowed to go to waste. Madam Müller considered it incumbent upon her to see that one studied dramatic expression, and another the violin, and another wood-carving, and another modelling in clay, besides all of the regulation studies.

She brought a great circle of friends about her, who adored her bohemian evenings and who considered the Baron one of the most interesting gentlemen they had ever met.

The Baron did not consider himself interesting. He was bored with himself.

He wondered if time would never pass in England—and drew little black imps while he was waiting to find out.

Among the many pleasing and heterodox friends who visited the Müllers was a newspaper man of a whimsical turn of mind. He had been the recipient on a certain occasion of a pack of playing cards in which each club spade, heart or diamond was represented by scarlet or black imps, and the design upon the backs of the cards was a writhing, twisting inferno of the same grotesque little creatures.

He looked at these long and appreciatively, did the newspaper man, and he was seized with an idea. This idea was the outcome of his observations. He had noticed that there was a look of extreme weariness in the eyes of the amiable Madame Müller, and that she walked more slowly than she used, and her selections at the piano, which had once been noted for their length,

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were now brief and lacking in spirit. In short, the brave spirit of Madame Müller drooped under many burdens.

So the newspaper man entered upon the making of a collection, assisted by the energetic and talented children of the Baron. Little black imps were gathered from every part of the house, heads were torn from letters that the fascinating imps might be preserved, leaves were rent from books, and even a pocket handkerchief done in a procession of dancing imps, in indelible ink, was taken in charge.

The practical friend sent these to a certain much-illustrated comic weekly and anxiously awaited the results. The family was of the opinion that there would be no results. The Baron was in a state of peaceful ignorance.

But the results were almost dramatic. The comic weekly was amused—and it is not easy to amuse a comic weekly. It wanted a series, indefinitely continued, of little black imps illustrating current events.

The officious friend carried the good news to Baron von Müller.

"Sir!" stormed the Baron. "You have exceeded your privileges. You have made me ridiculous. I am no clown to fillip and kick while the people laugh! Will you have the great goodness to recall these personal possessions of mine from the stranger to whom you have confided them?"

The newspaper man was obdurate.

"You will be distinguished in a few minutes," he said. "I'm going to set my alarm clock so I can wake up at the proper moment and see the fun. No, I'll not write for the imps. I've already sold part of them. The cheque will reach you in a few days. And you must be about those illustrations of current happenings. When they want a thing on a paper they want it. They don't care to wait."

"Am I to be at the beck and call of these men whom I have never seen?"

"It is not necessary to see them in order to be at their beck and call."

The Baron considered all Englishmen stupid, but he regarded this one as particularly so. Especially when he found that his family was leagued with the perverse man to insist upon the making of the little imps.

Under protest, and with frequent lamentings that he would be made ridiculous, the Baron worked on.

The first few days were drudgery, but the second week saw him tolerant, the third week found him interested, and at the end of a month he was enthusiastic. The joy of work—individual, creative work—was an emotion he had only just discovered. And when the monetary results became appreciable he grew almost purse-proud.

He began to gather ideas about the propriety of women working, and finally he commanded his wife to cease her money-earning. With a great show of wifely submission Madame Müller obeyed.

She rested at last, after the day's heat and burden, and a smiling German gentleman, lord of his house and dictator over his dominions, made adorable little black imps in the solitude of his study.

W. F. Wikstone.

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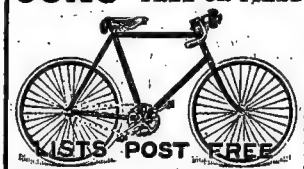

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THE PAPER FOR THE TEA TABLE.

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The Brain Gymnasium.

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular six shilling novels to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, May 7th, 1900.

No. 100.

When can four be less than three?

No. 101.

If you write . . . . . at . . . . . do not . . . . . the . . . . .

Complete this sentence by inserting five words, each containing the same five letters.

No. 102.

My initials will form the name of a well-known mountain:

CONSEQUENCE, TIDY, COMMAND, PALE, SILLY, EQUIPMENT, FRESH.

No. 103.

My FIRST we all possess, 'tis necessary quite.
Some prize it with a loving care; some look on it with spite;
Some feebly FIRST their hate of FIRST;
Some FIRST for your delight.

How oft we find some cherished thing—
Some worshipped thing we thought divine—
Is unresponsive to the ring;
'Tis SECOND, sans auriferous shine.

My WHOLE reversed is a source of joy
To many a man and little boy;
And not reversed, it is a sight,
When well applied, all dazzling white.

No. 104.

The centrals of the names of the following, when properly arranged, will give the name of an English statesman:

"A smoke."
"At present."
"A countryman."
"A trifle."
"Traders."
"A cave."
"Abolish."

No. 105.

Form a word-square with the equivalents of the following:

"A FELLOW," "IN THIS PLACE," "A SPACE," "A FRUIT."

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 76 to 81.

The prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Mr. W. Tapley, of 10 Gregory Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire, whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

Each of the following has been awarded a copy of "Guilty Gold," by Headon Hill:

J. W. Johnson, 106 Wistaston Road, Crewe.
G. F. Hill, 12 Medlicott Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham.
W. T. Cook, 29 Roding Road, Homerton, N.E.
A. Royle, 9 Glaybury Road, West Kensington.
S. J. Bremer, 27 Douglas Road, Canonbury, N.
A. Edwards, 12 Meredith Street, E.C.
W. J. Barter, 38 Douglas Street, Cork.
W. Gyde, The Barracks, Warley, Essex.
J. B. Johnson, 153 Walthall Street, Crewe.
H. Chadwick, 12 Meredith Street, Clerkenwell, E.C.

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES.

Nos. 82 to 87.

No. 82. MUM-MY.

No. 83.
R U S T L E
L U S T R E
S U T L E R
U L S T E R
R E S U L T

No. 84.
ME C CA
ENG L AND
KIMB E RLEY
AME R ICA
NEW Y ORK.

No. 85.
B T A P I A T P
B I R M I N G H A M
R A E N T U E R
D P N T O E M T

No. 86. STAFFORD. *Satire, affable, flog, riddle.*

No. 87.
G L U M
L O N E
U N I T
M E T E

THE SUNDAY READER, Pearson's religious weekly, published on Wednesday, price 1d. weekly, is now running a grand series of articles entitled "Robbers of the Fatherless and Widows," being a complete exposé of the methods of bogus company promoters. *THE SUNDAY READER* is the most enterprising religious paper of the age; lose no time in getting a copy. If your agent has not got it, apply to the Editor, *THE SUNDAY READER*, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and a copy will be supplied.

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GIGANTIC SPRING SALE, 1900.

ILLUSTRATED BARGAIN CATALOGUES OF CARPETS, HEARTHRUGS, TABLE LINEN, CURTAINS, etc., POST FREE, if mentioning *Short Stories*, 28/4/900, when writing.

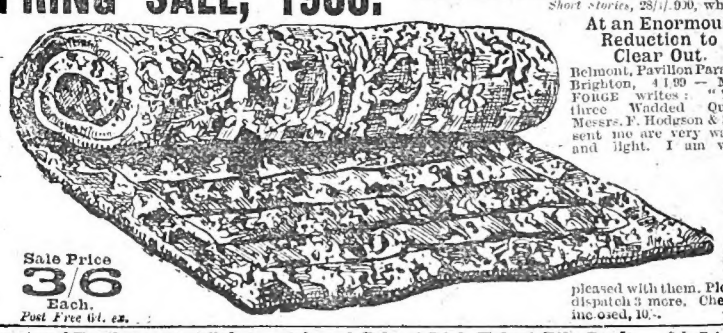
A Stock of 10,000 PATENT WADDED QUILTS, TORALIUMS, OR BED COVERS

(as Illustration).

Covered with Oriental Reversible Soft Satcen with double border. Size 54in. by 90in. These Quilts are offered below anything in the Wholesale Trade, and cause the greatest consternation to the buyer, wondering how they can be produced for the money.

SPECIAL OFFER.

Three Quilts for 10/-, or Six for 19/6, or Twelve for 38/-



Sale Price **3/6** Each.

Post Free 6d. ex.

At an Enormous Reduction to Clear Out.

Belmont, Pavilion Parade, Brighton, 4/1/99 — Mrs. FORGE writes: "The three Wadded Quilts Messrs. F. Hodgson & Son sent me are very warm and light. I am very pleased with them. Please dispatch 3 more. Cheque inclosed, 10/-."

SPECIAL 1900. SPECIALLY REDUCED INTRODUCTION SALE PARCEL WITH FREE GIFT

enclosed, consisting of

1 Magnificently Rich Cream-Coloured Curly Sheepskin Hearthrug, average size 6 feet by 3 feet, perfection in quality.

1 Beautiful Reversible Art Crimson Plush Bed Rug, Sofa Cover, or Table Cover, double warp, very heavy, size 50 inches by 78 inches.

2 Beautiful Silver Goatskin Door Mats, lined woollen cloth throughout, pinked edges, best finish, ornamental to any room.

1 Elegant Hair Brush, highly finished, with mirror back.

THE LOT **10/6**

Postage 9d. extra

"Given" Away.

Providing *SHORT STORIES* Coupon, 28/4/1900, is quoted, a FREE GIFT will be enclosed — a very handsome Electro Silver Plated "OWL" PEPPER STAND with coloured eyes and gilt feet. Cash returned if not satisfied. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are extolled by all the Nations of the Earth.

Gigantic Sale of the "QUEEN'S ROYAL" Household

Sale Price.

2/- HEARTHRUGS Each

In REVERSIBLE RICH TURKEY PATTERNS, measuring 6ft. long, and 3ft. wide. These HEARTHRUGS have gained a world-wide reputation for MAGNIFICENCE, CHEAPNESS, and UTILITY, having no equal. Registered New Designs, and considered Works of Art. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. SPECIAL OFFER.—Three for 5/9; Six for 11/3; Twelve for 22/-

The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are patronised by Royalty, Nobility, and Clergy from all parts of the Empire.

Gigantic Sale of the "Queen's Royal" Household Reversible Rich Turkey Pattern

CARPETS (Regd.)

Trade Mark on all Goods. Beware of Imitations.

Admittedly the Cheapest in the World. *Woven without seam. Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel for excellence and beauty. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.*

6 ft. by 9 ft.	7/6	10½ ft. by 12 ft.	18/-
8 ft. by 9 ft.	9/-	12 ft. by 12 ft.	21/-
6 ft. by 12 ft.	10/6	9 ft. by 15 ft.	19/6
9 ft. by 9 ft.	11/-	12 ft. by 13½ ft.	22/-
9 ft. by 10½ ft.	13/6	12 ft. by 15 ft.	25/6
9 ft. by 12 ft.	15/-	12 ft. by 18 ft.	30/-
9 ft. by 13½ ft.	16/6	12 ft. by 21 ft.	35/6

REDUCED SALE PRICE.

Octagon Villa, The Lizard, R.S.O., 15/8/98.—J. CARWARDINE, Esq., writes: "I am very pleased with the Carpet you sent me. I have saved 50 per cent. by giving you the order. I paid half as much again to a local tradesman for Carpets the same quality a year ago. I have never been so pleased of any former purchase."

Colossal Sale of Rich Velvet Pile Real *Sale Price*

BRUSSELS HEARTHRUGS 5/6

In Rich Oriental and Indian Art Designs, measuring 6ft. by 3ft., which for price, real value, weight and richness of manufacture will be found unapproachable.

SPECIAL OFFER.—3 Rugs, 16/-; 6 for 31/-

"Melville Castle, Glasswade, Midlothian, June 1st.

The Right Honourable The VISCOUNTESS MELVILLE writes: "I am very pleased with the 'Royal' Velvet Hearthrugs to hand, and would like four more Hearthrugs. Her ladyship would also like two Velvet Carpets at 39/-, one ditto at 60/6 to match them. Cheque £8 14s. inclosed."

COLOSSAL SALE OF RICH VELVET PILE

REAL BRUSSELS CARPETS

Extraordinarily Heavy, very Best Quality, Newest and Choicest Designs. In Old Gold, Sultan, Terra Cotta, Crimson, Sky, Navy, and the latest colours. With handsome border to correspond. Guaranteed to wear for years and give every satisfaction. The sizes and prices as follows (all ready for putting down):

REDUCED SALE PRICE LIST.

4½ ft. by 7 ft.	11/-	VELVET PILE	9 ft. by 12 ft.	38/-
6 ft. by 9 ft.	18/-		11 ft. by 12 ft.	47/-
7½ ft. by 9 ft.	23/-	BRUSSELS	12 ft. by 13½ ft.	59/-
9 ft. by 9 ft.	28/-	CARPET	12 ft. by 16 ft.	69/-
9 ft. by 10½ ft.	33/-	SQUARES	12 ft. by 18 ft.	77/-

Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel of excellence and beauty. Thousands of repeat orders and testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

Ramsden, Charlbury, 4/3/98.—Lady HICKS BEACH writes: "Will Messrs. F. Hodgson and Son send her one of their 'Queen's Royal' Carpets, 9ft. by 9ft., 11/-? Cheque enclosed. The other parcel received safely, and I am pleased with it."

Also RICH VELVET PILE STAIR CARPETS, bordered to match,

18in. wide, 1/8 per yard; 22½in. wide, 2/- per yard. 27in. wide, 2/3 per yard.

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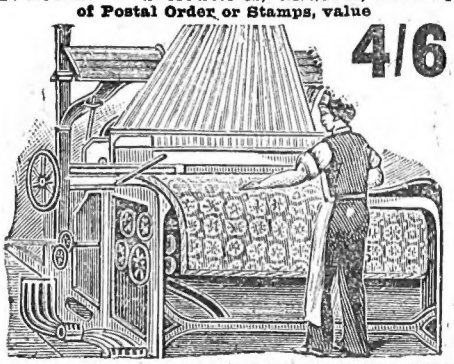
OUR NEW VENTURE.—Yes. Two different Pattern Hearthrugs or Carpets for the Price of One!

H.R.H. Prince L. of Battenberg. H.R.H. Prince K. Bigit Siam. Marquis of Breadalbane. Sir Henry de Bathe. Sir Henry Bellingham. Sir E. H. Blair, Bart. H.I.H. Eugénie de Christoforo. Princess Palseologœ Nicephoroœ Duchess of Wellington. Marchioness of Breadalbane. Marchioness of Hastings. Archbishop of York. Princess de Croy. Commence.

To Readers of "Short Stories," 28/4/1900, on receipt of Postal Order or Stamps, value 4/6



(Regd.) We will send you THE LARGEST GENUINE REVERSIBLE CARPET in BRUSSELS PATTERN WITH RUG ever sold at the price, direct from the Looms to any address on receipt of amount. Suitable for drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, etc., bordered and woven in Brussels patterns, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember these are woven, and are made of a material almost equal to wool. Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices.

SPECIAL OFFER—2 CARPETS and 2 RUGS, 8s. [Cut this out.]

PRODIGIOUS SALE of the "PRUDENTIAL"

TURKEY PATTERN CARPETS (Regd.)

Reversible, woven throughout, bordered, richly blended in several colours to suit any furniture. These goods cannot be distinguished from real Brussels when laid down, and cannot be excelled in durability.

Size.	Each.		Size.	Each.
6ft. by 6ft.	2/11	REDUCED	10½ft. by 12ft.	11/6
6ft. by 7½ft.	3/11		9ft. by 15ft.	12/6
6ft. by 9ft.	4/9		12ft. by 12ft.	12/9
7½ft. by 9ft.	5/11	SALE	12ft. by 13½ft.	14/6
9ft. by 9ft.	7/6		12ft. by 15ft.	15/9
9ft. by 10½ft.	8/6	PRICE.	12ft. by 18ft.	19/6
9ft. by 12ft.	9/6		12ft. by 21ft.	22/6

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

A Reversible "Prudential" Hearthrug (Regd.), to match above Carpets, sent for 1/6 ext. a size 2yd. long and 1yd. wide. Special Offer, Three Hearthrugs for 4/3, or Six for 8/-, or Twelve for 15/6, sterling value.

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We rely upon spontaneous Repeat Orders from our Clients for the maintenance of our Trade. Established nearly a Quarter of a Century. All orders despatched same day in rotation as they arrive by post. N.B.—Foreign Orders executed and packed free, and shipped at lowest rates. Telegraphic Address: "ECLIPSE, LEEDS." Telephone, No. 948. *Cheques and P.O.'s payable to—*

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On receipt of this Coupon and P.O. or Stamps for amount, we guarantee to send any goods as above to your address in any part of the United Kingdom. Cash returned in full if not satisfied.

(Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

F. HODGSON & SON, Manufacturers, Importers, and Merchants, WOODSLEY ROAD, LEEDS.